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PETERSEN'S KIT CAR THE SPECIALTY CAR MAGAZINE

MARCH 1992
Volume 11, Number 2

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COVER You say you wanna look like a million, but you only have a few bucks to spare? See our special guide to budget kits on p. 20 for details on the ZMC Ponari shown here and other affordable specialty cars. And if you're curious about what it takes to replasticize a Pontiac, "Step By Step" on p. 60 shows a buildup of the Ponari. Cover photo by Mike Banks. Many thanks to Snap-on for supplying the roll-away tool box and impact wrench. Our performance trial of the turbo V6 Sebring begins on p. 78. Inset photo by Jerry Heasley.

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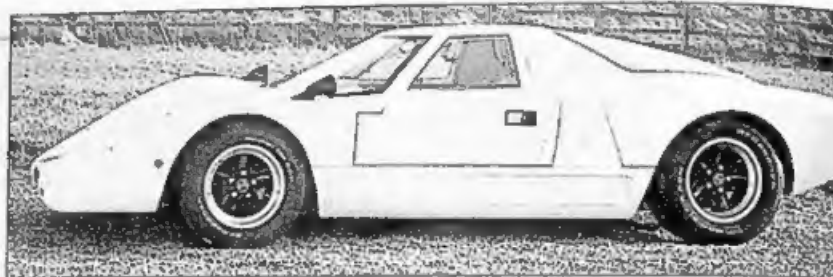
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SEEN/HEARD

A MANTA MIRAGE APPEARS

Searching for a Manta Montage or a Mirage? Well, look no further. Tornado Sports Cars in England has been building McLaren M6 GT replicas for the past six years, and they are visually identical to the Manta Montage and Mirage. The chassis used is a fully triangulated, tubular space frame that features double-wishbone, fully adjustable front and rear suspension. Braking is provided by four-wheel discs, vented rotors up front, and solid at the rear. A hi-po Ford 302 that is



mid-mounted and mated to a DeLorean/Lotus Turbo transaxle with either four or five speeds, furnishes a claimed top speed of 180 mph.

In addition to manufacturing McLaren M6 GT replicas, Tornado also builds a replica of the Ford GT40 MK1. The

chassis used on the GT40 is of the same configuration as that used for the M6 GT. Information: Tornado, Dept. KC, Unit 25, Meadow Mill Ind. Est., Dixon St., Kidderminster Worcs, England DY101HH, 0562/820372.



CLASSIC ROADSTERS' T-BIRD

Regal T-Birds of Madison, Wisconsin, has sold manufacturing and marketing rights for its '55 Ford Thunderbird replica to Classic Roadsters. The first model by the new owner is due out in early 1992. Called the '55 Classic, it will feature Mustang components. In other news from Classic Roadsters, the firm has also acquired marketing and manufacturing rights to American Classics' '57 T-Bird. Details have not been finalized as we go to press.

KIT CAR WORLD TO PRODUCE THE MIGI

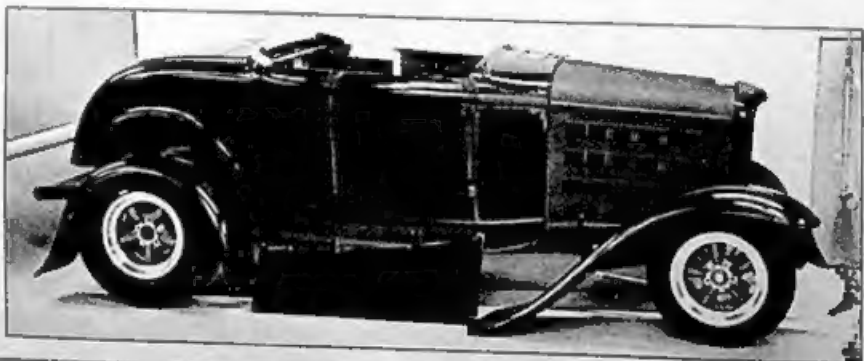
Kit Car World has announced the purchase of production rights to the Daytona Migi. The Migi has been in production since 1975 by LaVerne Martincic, and it's a replica of the '52-'54 MG. With this new transfer, the company assures the many owners of the Migi and Migi II that replacement parts as well as complete kits will continue to be available. Kit Car World also manufactures the XC-53 Corvette replica, the Gypsy trailer, and operates a full-line fiberglass business. For more information, contact Kit Car World, Dept. KC, 4650 Old Winter Garden Rd., Orlando, FL 32811, 407/298-0893 or 407/295-8830.

PACKAGES

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Packages are available for a variety of street rods, from roadsters to coupes to cabriolets. Information: Gibbon Fiberglass Reproductions, Inc., Dept. KC, P.O. Box 490, Gibbon, NE 68840, 308/468-6178.



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SEEN/ HEARD

FAIRLANE OFFERS STREET RODS



Fairlane says it is now producing fiberglass replica bodies for '35-'36 Ford Roadsters, Phaetons, Cabriolets, and Boattail Roadsters. Since the tooling equipment was purchased from Automotive Specialties, the firm's name has changed to Fairlane Automotive Specialties, and is located at E. Walker St., St. Johns, MI 48879, 517/224-6460.



COOL SCHOOL DAYS

Some may study in a classroom, but design student Phil Frank, of California State University, San Jose, found himself in the lucky position of having both foam and ideas. He set to work making a full-size model based on the Ford Festiva chassis. The car's stance measures only 35.5 inches, so the faux roofline created by the pillars added the special look he was trying for. Voila! This funky fresh sports coupe has some novel innovations, including no doors, windows, or roof, which helps keep down costs. However, can anyone but the Dukes of Hazard make the jump over the window ledges? The car is purely a model at this point, but Phil looks forward to the future when he can take molds for production.

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Classic Roadsters, Ltd., Unveils 1955 Thunderbird* Replica

FARGO, ND — Classic Roadsters, Ltd., does it again. Hot on the heels of their most recent hit — the Classic 427 Cobra* replica — Classic Roadsters, Ltd., proudly introduces yet another model to their wide selection of sports car reproductions.

Classic Roadsters, Ltd. has acquired the manufacturing and marketing rights to the Regal Thunderbird* replica. After minor modifications and mechanical updates by the Classic Roadster engineering department, the new '55 Thunderbird* reproduction is now ready for sale.

When asked about the latest addition, Classic Roadster Vice President Scott Dennison said, "We feel our '55 Thunderbird* reproduction will help round-out our full line of roadsters. The Classic 427 has quickly become the fastest selling Cobra* reproduction in the world, and the Sebring, Duke and 500K models continue to make

a strong showing in the industry. With the '55 Thunderbird*, Classic Roadsters has the opportunity to satisfy every customer's needs...from the luxury enthusiast to the performance driver."

Dennison, former president of the Excalibur Motor Corporation, is currently Classic Roadster's director of production and engineering. He is uniquely qualified to launch the introduction of Classic's new Thunderbird* reproduction.

Classic Roadster president Jeff Davis added, that while the Regal Thunderbird* is a solid, well respected kit, Classic Roadsters has taken progressive measures to "make it the most complete, highest quality Thunderbird* component automobile on the market." The Classic '55 Thunderbird* reproduction is now available as a component kit or custom-built.

The new Thunderbird* on the block will

be designed for front engine V8 power. Suspension requirements are stock Ford. Additional accessories include removable hard-top, power windows and air conditioning, which help make the '55 Classic Thunderbird* reproduction one of the most sought after kits in the industry.

The initial production run will be limited. Individuals hoping for immediate delivery should place their order for the new '55 Classic Thunderbird* today, and are urged to call Classic Roadsters at their soonest convenience. Factory representatives will be on hand to answer any further questions.

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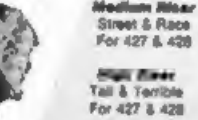
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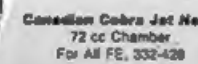
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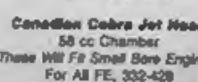
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SEEN/ HEARD

RIDDEN BY A KNIGHT

Now available from Louisell Enterprises is a television car every kit car enthusiast will remember. This transformed Pontiac Trans Am (or any '82 or newer model) was originally designed for the series by a car-star himself, George Barris. The company relates that the car's "functional digital dream" interior includes two five-inch color television monitors, an overhead console with keypad and switches, and an array of lights and readouts to rival the Starship Enterprise. Maybe that should be the next



project. The nose has a sequential scanner, and the black mirror paint job adds a finishing touch. Information: Louisell Enterprises, Dept. KC, 6516 Bellinger Dr., Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858, 517/772-4048.



inch round-tube steel ladder frame that accepts either Ford Mustang II, performance Ford, Jaguar, or Corvette suspension systems. (We'll be covering the latter setup in a separate tech feature.) All hinged body panels (doors, trunk, and hood) are

double-walled for strength and rigidity. A number of different assembly packages are available, ranging from complete kits to finely finished turn-keys. Also in the works is a Super Cobra that may have a 450hp small-block V8, late-model Corvette suspension pieces, and the new 6-speed Richmond Gear tranny. Everett-Morrison's factory showroom in Tampa, Florida, is open to visitors, or you can contact the firm at 5137 W. Clifton St., Dept. KC, Tampa, FL 33634, 813/887-5885.

DON'T FORGET EVERETT-MORRISON

Attention all readers who wondered why Everett-Morrison Motorcars' Cobra replicas were not listed in our "Buyers' Guides to Kit Cars" (September '91 and January '92). Don't worry—the company is alive and well. If you can't wait until we feature one of its well-built vehicles in an upcoming issue, here are a few facts to tide you over. Starting with the basics, the chassis consists of a MIG-welded, 4-

ULTRA ON ITS OWN

Ultra Designs, formerly a distributor of Sienna Countach replicas, has announced that it is now marketing a Countach replica of its own. The body will be similar to the Sienna but,

according to Ultra Designs, the price will be lower. Production is expected to be completed in April or May. Information: Ultra Designs, Dept. KC, 35 Clarence St., Brockton, MA 02401, 508/586-3112.

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a complete Cobra body for \$450; a Stiletto at \$900; a Countach for \$3,500, a "Jamaican" and "Aztec", both under \$1,000; 1929 Mercedes and Jaguar SS100 kits, both still crated, for half the factory price!

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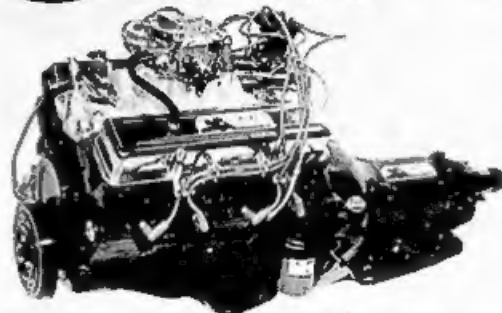
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SEEN/ HEARD

JUST THE TWO OF US

A remarkable array of Cobras, both authentic and replicas, recently turned up at Willow Springs Raceway. Among them was an invaluable FIA model that served as the inspiration for Unique Motorcar's 289 FIA replica ("One Of A Kind," September '91). We managed to catch the two side by



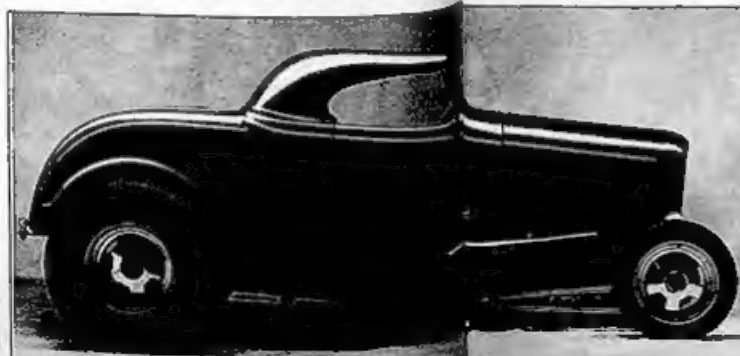
side for a quick comparison of sorts (the authentic one is on the left). Afterward, Unique dealer Neal Hardy invited us to take a few hot laps around the track. He didn't have to ask twice. While there weren't any Ferraris prodding us on, and this event was only for fun, the car had no trouble holding its own among some very distinguished competitors.

COMING UP...

The Import-Kit/Replica Nationals will take place from May 15-17 at the Carlisle Fairgrounds in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. You can pre-register your show vehicle free of charge, and the show sponsor will be giving away a Beck Spyder Replica. Contact Lisa Leathery at 717/243-7855 for more information.

Also on the horizon is the 15-hour Monte Carlo Road Rallye that now allows replicas to run in the Vintage and Vintage Novice classes of the road race held March 27-29. This race course runs from Los Angeles to Laughlin, Nevada. Information: Into The Night Events, ITN 1992, Dept. KC, 1858 Fox Hills, Los Angeles, CA 90025, 213/556-8305 or 818/343-1463.

THE DEUCE IS LOOSE



Total Performance is living up to its name. The company's new '32 Roadster kit is distinctive and detailed, with features such as a removable hardtop, a split windshield, and hot rod headers. The introductory package includes a

rolling chassis with coil-over shocks front and rear, a 9-inch Ford rearend, steering, and a windshield. Options available include four-way disc brakes, gauges, a credit card ignition, and an interior kit with storage space provided by fold-

ing seat backs. The options are available separately to update your '32 in the future. Info: Total Performance, Inc., Dept. KC, 400 S. Orchard St., Wallingford, CT 06492, 203/265-7107. **KC**

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18 KIT CAR

MAILBOX

ROLLS REPLICAS?

I've been reading Kit Car for years, and I've yet to come across a kit for a late-model Rolls-Royce convertible. If you could send me the address of anyone who produces them or could custom build one, I'd be very grateful.

DeVerne Chapman
Queensbury, NY

Dean Morrison (formerly of Everett-Morrison) has a vehicle that looks similar to a Rolls-Royce. You can reach him at Allied Industries Int., Dept. KC, P.O. Box 982, Vancouver, WA 98666.

ASK AND YE SHALL...

I have been an avid reader of your magazine for almost a decade now, and have been entertained and educated by its material. However, for some reason, you no longer cover much about VW conversions. For this reason I find myself picking up your magazine less often at the newsstand. The kit car concept that I—and I'm sure many of your other readers—became addicted to, was that of buying an old, inexpensive VW and turning it into something you were proud to show off (sort of the poor man's affordable dream). This being the case, why would anyone buy a two-year-old Porsche and start ripping it apart to build a kit car? In the same vein, why would I buy a kit car that came complete? It seems to defeat the purpose.

Please make an old KC enthusiast happy—bring back VW conversion and VW product coverage!

Mark Pinkston
Burtonsville, MD

Please see the article "Cheap Thrills" on p. 20 of this issue.

TRAVELING AT WARP SPEED

I'm writing in regard to the advertisement for the Warp Five Montage car in the November '91 issue. There was an error in the phone number listed; it should have been 816/228-2960. The car looks a lot like the Manta that was available in the early '80s and then faded from the scene. Is this a resur-

rection of the Manta? How about some more information? I think it would be of interest to Manta builders as well as potential Warp 5 Montage builders.



Please keep up your excellent coverage of one of the most exciting areas in automotive sport today.

Dan Norrick
Anoka, MN

We hear that Warp Five does indeed have the Manta's original molds, and we'll be featuring its first model in a future issue.

JAG HUNTING



When looking through a back issue of Kit Car, I came across the article you did on the JPR "Wildcat." I'd like to get in touch with JPR, but in spite of many inquiries, I have never received a response. I respectfully request the company's mailing address if it's still in business, and I appreciate your time.

David Fregeau
Woodland, IL

You are one of the many readers who have asked us to let the Jag out of the bag. We're happy to help! The JPR Wildcat is being imported by G.T. Motorsports (Dept. KC, 6893 Root Rd., North Ridgeville, OH 44039). Both Dion Sportscars (Dept. KC, 28 Loma Ave., Long Beach, CA 90803, 310/438-1085) and Overseas Imports, Ltd.

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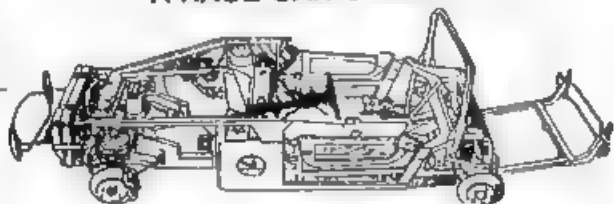
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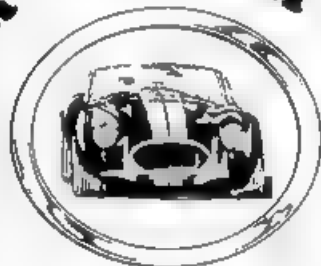
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MAILBOX

(Dept. KC, 101 Gordon Rd., Falls Church, VA 22046, 703/534-5400) are importing the XKE kit manufactured by Triple C Challenger

ANOTHER MOVIE STAR

I enjoy Kit Car magazine, and have worked with several kits. My latest interest is in movie cars. For some time, I have been interested in doing a Back to the Future DeLorean. The DeLorean time machine caught my fancy and I'd like to build one. Are there any DeLorean kits out there? Is anyone currently working on a Back to the Future car? Blueprints, interior gadgetry, and so on?

Do you plan any future articles on the vehicle? I'd like to see photos inside and out. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

Robert Boyce
Lakewood, CA

If anyone does, we hope the panels are made of silver-painted fiberglass instead of stainless steel. Otherwise, the cost will be absurdly high.

INTERIOR DECORATING

I have been studying the AF/GT 308 Ferrari-style kits and Testarossa kits based on the Fiero.

I have seen some nice kits offered by American Fiberglass, Curson Kits, and others. The bodies are great, but the interiors still look like the Fiero. Are there any kits that offer a dash and gauge layout that replicate the original?

Harris Nyland
Milan, MI

Try V-8 Arche (Dept. KC, 1307 Lykins Lane, Niles, MI 49120, 616/683-3227). He has a new Fiero dash design in the works. **KC**

Letters in Kit Car reflect the opinions of the writers and do not imply the endorsement of this magazine. All letters should be addressed to Kit Car magazine, 8490 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069. Letters should include the writer's name, address, and telephone number. We reserve the right to edit and/or condense letters for clarity, brevity, or other editorial purposes. Due to the volume of mail received, we cannot answer letters personally.



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PROTO-Z—\$2950



CONVETTE—\$2740

Cheap Thrills

One of the tricks about building a specialty car is that it always costs more than anticipated. That's not because kit options sometimes turn out to be necessities for properly completing the car. More often, it's a matter of just having to have a chromed engine, wire wheels, or a trick paint job. In other cases, special tools, custom-grade materials, or unexpected donor-car repairs drive up the cost.

Whatever the reasons your specialty car ends up costing more than you thought it would, it's prudent to pick a kit that is low-priced to begin with so you have some funds left over for any surprise expenses. The following pages feature a sampler of low-cost kits. This list is by no means exhaustive, but does provide a basis of comparison for other budget buildups. Look carefully at the price breakdown, because some kits include more features than others. Some of them consist merely of fiberglass body panels, while others are nearly complete pallet cars—all you add is the drivetrain. Also, the prices quoted here do not include the cost of the donor car, which can vary widely. Moreover, add to these figures the price of a paint job, freight, and any outside labor you hire. If you can do all the work yourself and you already own a suitable donor car, all the better. Once you've made a realistic estimate of your expenses, then proceed with the project.



PONARI—\$4400



RAYCO 914—\$1395



MIDTEC—\$5000



ROMA—\$4500

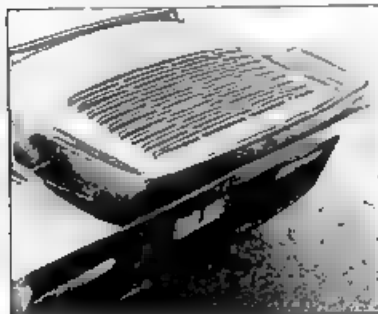


DION SPEEDSTER—\$5995

INNOVATIONS 930-VEE

The VW Beetle's relationship with the kit car industry is long-standing and pervasive, but based mostly on supplying affordable mechanical components for a variety of body styles. The homely Bug body often has been viewed as more or less disposable, a useless and homely husk surrounding a versatile chassis and drivetrain. Innovations' Ralph Stork took a different approach, however, choosing to exaggerate the lines of this People's Car with Porsche-style fiberglass body panels. His 930-VEE is still vaguely recognizable as a Bug, but only after a double take.

The basic kit (\$1595) consists of

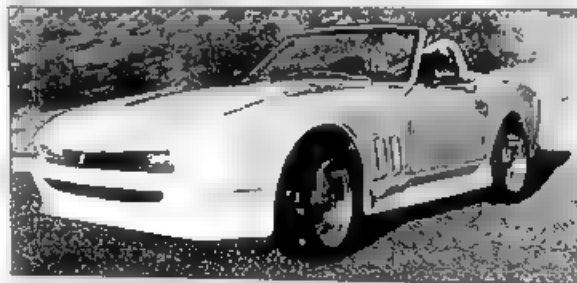


PROTO Z

Aside from aero styling packages, about the only body kit available for the Datsun Zs (240, 260, and 280) has been the GTO-style unit. This was unfortunate because the Z-car is a great candidate for a donor car, with good street performance and an affordable price tag (particularly if it has body damage—a common sight due to thin sheetmetal).

Arizona Z Car has just introduced a slick new rebody for Datsun Zs that completely disguises the donor's origins. While we were photographing the Proto Z, nobody from the crowd it quickly attracted could guess the true identity of this futuristic-looking car. Yet the kit is remarkably easy to install. Simply remove the front fenders and hood, weld two vertical support brackets on the bumper assembly, and then bolt on the one-piece, fiberglass front—that's all there is to it. The entire section hinges forward for access to the engine. And get this, the price of the front piece installed is only \$995. As for the rear, the Corvette-style panel simply lays over the original sheetmetal and requires only a bit of finish work at the seams. For \$239, this unit includes turn signals and taillights with socket assemblies. Add \$219 for a pair of side skirts.

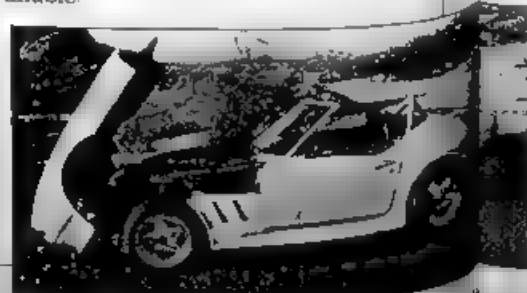
Granted, Arizona Z Car's optional convertible con-



version, for \$1495, raises the price a bit because some structural reinforcement is necessary (done at the shop in Phoenix, Arizona). However, the total cost of the Proto Z shown here amounted to less than \$3000, not including wheels, rubber, and paint. Due to the decrease in weight, you may want to lower the car once the new body has been installed. Dave Epstein, president of Arizona Z, claims the car is a bit quicker off the line with the lighter fiberglass bodywork.

Should you want to improve your Z's performance in other ways, Arizona Z has a catalog full of products, such as racing-grade disc brakes, a variety of suspension pieces, and even an adjustable fuel-injection system. Other body kits, aero styling packages, and custom tube frames are also available.

SOURCE
Arizona Z Car
Dept. KC
2110 W. Devonshire St.
Mesa, AZ
85201
602/844-9677



skin to the visual one. We'd also opt for the 930 VEE Custom Dash (\$199), a modern-looking unit with a clean, gelcoated finish. Stork says the installation is a simple bolt-on process, and you can create your own layout for lights, instruments, stereo, and whatever

else you want.

On the model shown here, Stork's personal ride, he redrilled and stud-ded the stock drums for the standard Chevy pattern so the dress 15x8 wheels would fit easier. They're wrapped with BFGoodrich rubber, P235/60R15 in the front and P295/50R15 in the rear. A BMW red paint job, chromed engine parts, and a custom interior with Pontiac Grand Am seats raised Stork's total investment in the car to about \$9800. Now, if he could just figure out a way to install one of those Porsche 911 engines.

SOURCE
Innovations
Dept. KC
P.O. Box 60642
Phoenix, AZ 85082
602/377-0104

DION SPEEDSTER

One of the strange things about the much-prized Porsche 911 is that even though its performance has been pushed to extraordinary heights, the styling remains rooted in the past. It's difficult to tell the difference between a well-kept '70 model and one only a few years old. The slant-nose mod is one of the more popular 911 conversions, but this is basically a variation on a familiar theme. What's needed is an all-new, '90s-style 911, and the Dion Speedster seems more than equal to the challenge.

Dion's rebody features all the cues of contemporary auto design—a smoothly sculpted form with no hard edges to snag air molecules. This plasticized Porsche both preserves and improves on a distinguished lineage. The tapered leading edge and sidebody curves suggest an updated, high-performance turbo prototype, while the rounded rear end evokes the Speedster of an earlier era. Futuristic turn-signal covers confirm that the overall design is decidedly modern.

Just about any 911 or 912 is a suitable donor car, but Bernard Hicks of Dion says the two-inch-shorter wheelbases on the '65-'68 models require modifications to both the trailing arms and half-shafts. Also, '69-'74 models need a later hood and catch assembly. Designed by James Kazar ("The Mark of Zara," September '91), the Dion speedster was originally intended for a '74 or newer car. For the Cabriolet version, Dion recommends starting with a Targa or convertible mode, since they're already reinforced. Although a Porsche 911 or 912 isn't usually thought of as a low-dollar donor, it is possible to obtain one with body damage for less than \$5000. If you already own a 911, the stock panels can be sold to defray the cost of the kit.

For \$5995, the Dion Speedster Basic Body Package includes 10 major body components and 11 minor pieces,



along with lights and hardware. The Deluxe Body Package, for \$1000 more, includes custom wiring harnesses for the pop-up headlights, and Pontiac Fiero bulb assemblies. If you don't want to source these items yourself, Extras, ranging from exhaust tips (\$80) to a convertible conversion (\$1200), are also available.

We've read the assembly manual, and it's quite clear

and thorough. Most of the kit bolts to the stock unibody mounts, and the door skins simply screw on, but the stock rear quarter panels first have to be cut back with a saber saw or air chisel. Dion claims a beginner can do the entire job and have the car ready for paint in about three full days, or several weekends if he or she wants to spread out the workload. That's an amazingly simple and relatively inexpensive process for such a radical transformation.

And what you have at the end is a specialty car with a marque that will always hold its value.



SOURCE
Dion Sportscars
Dept. KC
28 Loma Ave., Long Beach,
CA 90803
310/438-1085

ROMA

Italianesque rebodies for Pontiac Fieros are hugely popular in the specialty car market, but the Roma from Carter's Conversions bucks the trend, drawing inspiration from a '70s sports car that probably never appeared on *Magnum P.I.* or *Miami Vice*. The styling is no less dramatic, but the image is more sophisticated. This is not another "me-too" Fiero conversion.

The price is attractive, too. With hardware and lights included, the body kit costs only \$4500, and Carter's Conversions will install it for \$2000, if you don't want to do it yourself. Body prep and paint runs another \$3000. Larger wheels and tires are extra, and they start at around \$1200. Convertible, Targa, and T-tops are also available, as are a number of extras, including a leather dash.

As for installation, the conversion consists of six main panels constructed of handlaid fiberglass cloth, mat, and Coremat. They fasten on the original mountings with no seams to fill, minimizing the amount of bodywork required. Carter's claims that the assembly time is less than 80 hours, with no chassis alterations required, except for cutting a bit of the sheetmetal to fit the head-

light buckets, and some modifications on the door latch, rear-panel hinge brackets, and rear bumper. In addition, the battery in the V6 model should be relocated to the front for easier access and the suspension lowered with a Koni Shock Kit.

SOURCE
Carter's Conversions
Dept. KC
P.O. Box 245
Imley City, MI 48444
313/724-2333



SPECTRE BGW SPEEDSTER

It's tough to be a VW Beetle enthusiast in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The harsh winter climate combined with the city's enthusiastic distribution of road salt has all but eliminated the venerable Bug from the area, victims of the dreaded "iron moth." Imagine an entire generation of children who don't know how to play Slug-Bug.

And yet, this Bug-less land is home to Spectre-BGW, a manufacturer of customizing kits for the Volkswagen Beetle. BGW (that's short for Bohemian Glass Works) has been on the scene since 1977 and has sold more than 800 kits in that time. Since 1988, the firm's two facilities (a second shop is located near Phelps in northern Wisconsin) have been managed by Ron Hettwer, one of the firm's early investors.

BGW's most popular kit is the Super Speedster convertible shown here. Like all of BGW's kits, the Speedster retains the original car's basic structure, including the doors, cowl, suspension, controls, and engine bulkhead. No chassis shortening or rewiring is necessary, and the car retains most of the strength and rigidity of the original vehicle. The California Speedster kit fits '65 and later Type I VWs and '71-'72 Super Beetles, while the Super Speedster kit fits '73-'78 Super Beetles. All kits are designed to be built on hardtop bodies.

Despite its modest underpinnings, the BGW kit completely changes the personality of the Bug. From some angles you're sure the car is a VW. But move a few feet and you're not so sure anymore. Assembly of the Speedster requires removal of the original car's hardtop, rear body section, engine cover, and a portion of the windshield frame. A new rear bodyshell integrates smoothly with the engine cover and sweeps forward to cover the Bug's rear seat area. The resulting rear profile is a cross between a Porsche Speedster and a number of Pre-War coupes.

The BGW California Speedster kit also includes a new windshield frame and glass, polycarbonate side glass, and a folding top. BGW fabricates the top in its shop, using GM latches and more than 30 jig-welded steel pieces. All body parts are hand-laid fiberglass and dis-



play a quality finish. Large body sections have bonded inner liners to make them more rigid.

Owned and assembled by Ken Watters, the kit pictured here is based on a '73 Super Beetle. He added wide rear fenders and a whale tail molded by Creative Car Craft and offered by BGW. The tail is designed for a stock VW engine cover, and it took a lot of cutting and filing to adapt to the BGW hood, according to Wat-

ters. BGW's optional smoothy hood replaces the stock steel unit. An optional IMSA style front airdam completes the car's low, wide profile, but ends abruptly where it meets the stock front fenders. Perhaps some custom fairing with fiberglass would soften the transition a bit.

Aside from fitting the whale tail, Watters said the hardest part of assembling the Speedster was blending the rear body shell into the stock steel rear quarter panel. The BGW assembly manual features many line drawings and clear instructions, including a few tips to speed the job along.

The basic California Speedster kit, including the chopped windshield, convertible top, rear body shell, and side windows, sells for \$2250. The similar Super Speedster for Super Beetles is \$2400. For Bug heads in warm climates, BGW offers its Mahbu Speedster (with no convertible top or side windows) for about \$1250. Other pieces, including the smoothy hood, glass front and rear fenders, and the front airdam, are optional.

BGW also offers a wide selection of vintage-look front-end kits, including a '40 Ford, a '36 Ford, and a really neat '40 Willys hood. Other rear-end kits include the Opera Coupe and Special Delivery van.

—Charlie Plueddeman

SOURCE
Spectre/BGW, Ltd.
Dept. KC
2534 Woodland Park Dr
Delafield, WI 53018
414/646-4884



RAYCO 914 PORSCHE CONVERSION

Dan Sigler's Rayco 914 Porsche conversion has been available for a number of years, and it must rate as one of the most affordable conversions on the market. This Phase II conversion fitted to the body is styled after the 944 Porsche coupe, which seems to work rather well, turning the angular lines of the 914 into a more contemporary and soothing shape.

Using only five pieces, the body conversion package is very simple. Its two major body sections can either cover the original sheetmetal or completely replace it. The rear section fits over the 914 from the rear bumper to the top of the rollbar, just behind the driver's head. The nose section is also a one-piece sec-



tion that includes both front fenders and the spoiler. The stock hood and pop-up headlights remain on the car.

A pair of side rocker boxes join both sections along the lower sills and a small whale-style tail caps the rear trunklid. The rear bumpers are extended on this conversion, allowing more space in and under the rear

panel. The fiberglass bodywork is both bonded and bolted onto the steel Porsche chassis.

Sigler chose to finish this Rayco in gloss black acrylic, adding Boesch driving lights and 16-inch Porsche 944 alloy wheels. The interior on his 914 uses mostly stock pieces with a refreshed buckskin leather and cloth

CONVETTE

If there's any one specialty car that fulfills all of the criteria for an easy-to-build, low-buck, high-thrills recreation vehicle, it's the Convette. Convette Corporation had one of the most impressive displays at the SCVA National Kit Car Show in Ohio last August, with no fewer than eight Convettes attracting serious attention. Arrayed in the summer sun with their hot, Day-Glo color schemes—brightly-hued beach umbrellas, and icy high-bail glasses in their drink holders, these Beach Bum Package-equipped Convettes seemed a natural at the lakeside event. Also popular was the off-road-style Baja model shown here.

Gene Harrington, president of Convette, is no stranger to specialty vehicles. For the past 25 years he has been intimately involved in racing. The firm's development of the Chevrolet Chevette (and the identical Pontiac T-1000) as a top-down fun car/beach cruiser/RV runabout came as a direct result of its competition and car show involvement. After arriving at a car show or race with its big transporter, the crew needed local transportation, a vehicle less costly and more convenient to hop in and out of when running errands. Mel Mills and Mark Wright of the company developed the Convette (i.e., Converted Chevette). Widely available and economical, driveable '76-'87 Chevettes and T-1000s are advertised all around the country for as little as \$500—and even less if you find one with damaged body parts that you intend to remove anyway.

Boasting an easy-to-maintain and reliable Isuzu-designed drivetrain, all it requires for a personality improvement is a scalping—the removal of the top, the addition of a rollbar setup, and the added touch of a convertible top and a dazzling Day-Glo paint job. No welding is required for the conversion, and the only tools

needed other than standard shop tools are a reciprocating saw and a heavy-duty ½-inch drill with holesaw attachment, both can be found at any tool rental outlet.

Several kit packages are available. The Standard Convette Kit (\$1495) includes everything you need to complete the conversion—instructions (both printed and on videotape), a cloth top and side curtains, a main rollbar and rear support legs, all hardware, rubber trim items, Velcro fasteners, and decals. The Beach Bum Options

Package (\$300) supplies a canvas hammock for the back, drink trays, a beach umbrella, mounting brackets, and Beach Bum decals. The Baja (off-road) Options Package (\$1245) adds wide American Racing chrome sport wheels, Hercules mud tires, a suspension lift kit, four halogen lights, a rollbar, a whip antenna, a front pushbar, and headlight guards. And the RV Towing Options Package (\$225) features a towbar hitch, a driveshaft

bag to facilitate handling and stowing the driveshaft (for towing automatic transmission-equipped Convettes only—driveshaft removal is not required if your Convette is equipped with a manual transmission), and a front-end bra to prevent stone damage from the towing vehicle. A builder can customize the Convette even further by mixing and matching Convette Corporation's options packages, or by selecting from a wide choice of aftermarket appearance items, performance equipment, surfboard racks, Coleman and Igloo coolers, and high-output stereo sound systems.

—Curt Scott

SOURCE
Convette Corporation
Dept. KC
4104 Preston Hwy.
Louisville, KY 40213
502/363-2340



custom interior by Keller's Upholstery in St. Louis.

For those of you who don't know about the 914 Porsche, I'll tell you a little secret. It is possibly one of the best handling Porsches of all time. It got a bad rap when it was introduced because it wasn't a powerful beastie. But to those in the know, the 914 offers near race car handling for the street. It makes logical sense to use it for a conversion. It is cheap, handles great, and looks terrific once it's fixed up.

Sigler wanted more than just new looks from his converted 914, so he added some grunty American-style acceleration. He achieved this with a Kenne-Bell-built 3.8-liter Buick V6 turned into a hi-po mill with trick heads, a Buick racing cam, and a 450cfm Holley four-barrel carbure-

tor. The engine now cranks out over 200 horsepower through a stock 914 five-speed transmission and a heavy-duty clutch.

Rayco offers a full technical back-up service along with its conversions. The firm ships freight-free with no charges for crating and can supply small or large sections of the kit for easy repairs. Phase I is priced at \$1295. The Phase II (the bodywork is seen in our photos) is \$1395, and the Phase III with extended bumpers is \$1495. These prices do not include installation, paint, or accessories.

Sigler reckons a good body shop should be able to install the complete assembly in 55 hours and a home builder could do it in about 70 hours.

The Rayco conversion is a simple

fix for the dated, boxy lines of the 914 Porsche. It creates a fresh look without having to spend a fortune or expend much effort.

—David Fetherston

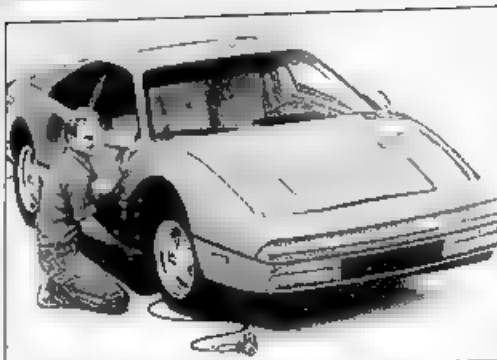


SOURCE
Rayco, Inc.
Dept. KC
710 Delmar
St. Louis, MO 63103
314/621-1321

PONARI

Z Motor Company does a lot of different types of car customizing, such as the Vetterossa Corvette conversion (you can probably guess what it looks like from the name) and chop-and-flare jobs for Porsche 928s, Mercedeses, and Nissan ZXs. Many of these vehicles go to customers in Japan and Germany. One of ZMC's most popular conversions both here and abroad is the Ponari Fiero rebody. As you look at the car from different angles, the lines suggest more than one famous European exotic. Yet they are cleverly blended into a unique and sporty package.

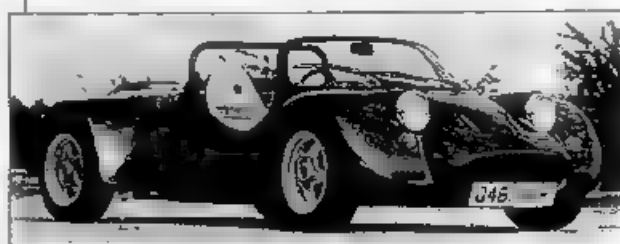
The price is enticing, too, listed at \$3500 for the starter package which consists of six major body panels. If



you don't want to source the arm items yourself, an accessory package of grilles, turn signals, head lights, and wheels runs a total of \$1900. ZMC will do the installation for \$2500, but having documented the buildup (see "Step By Step" on p 60), we wouldn't hesitate to jump right in and do it ourselves.

all, it's a low-buck buildup that looks like a million.

SOURCE
Z Motor Company
Dept. KC
11530 Firestone Blvd
Norwalk, CA 90650
310/929-8484



NOBLE'S MIDTEC SPYDER

In the land of the Crown Jewels, where princes play polo and drive Aston Martins, kit cars are a common sight. So many kits are on the road because the antiquated automobile tax system requires a great deal of paperwork—and pounds sterling—and it's far cheaper to register older cars converted to kits.

Lee Noble from Narborough, England, has been well aware of this situation for many years, and his wonderful Noble P4 Ferrari replica is about as cool as kit cars come (see "Mean Streets," January '92). However, it is a pricey number, so he decided it was time to make an affordable kit based on a common donor vehicle that still could produce a high level of performance.

The result is the Midtec Spyder, a sleek little two-seat roadster with a mid-place four-cylinder Pinto engine and a transaxle from Renault. "Renault!", you gasp. "Another French fiasco!" But the good news is that the Midtec is bound for our shores in 1992 in a modified form, ready for Ford Escort mechanicals.

Terry Mulloy recently acquired the Midtec operation from Noble and is re-engineering the car for U.S.-based components. This reworking mainly involves the frame area for engine mounting and a suspension adaption.

The Escort is a great choice, because any model from '76-'89 can be used, including the high-performance GT and Turbo versions. Ford Escort donor cars are cheap and plentiful, and new replacement parts are also inexpensive, which makes this kit ideal for U.S. home-builders. The kit will come gelcoated, ready for left-hand-drive steering and for bolt-up installation of all Escort components.

The kit's U.S. price is estimated at \$5000 (but we've seen other quotes as high as \$6500). It will come with a spaceframe chassis, all necessary suspension pieces, engine and transaxle mounting, coolant plumbing, gear linkage, a body shell with a separate hood, an internal

tub, floor molding, a windshield, a fuel tank, and a complete fastener assembly pack. A soft top, side curtains, and a roll-over bar are optional.

Noble has been building mid-engine kit cars for over 10 years, and this is the first of his '90s-generation cars to hit the streets. Based on the firm's extensive knowledge of racing cars, the Midtec should have exceptional handling and a great power-to-weight ratio. The body styling is tight and wraps around all parts of the structure like a racecar. The nose is low and flows up into the windshield about 45 degrees. Other interesting parts of the design include pontoon-type fenders and the spare tire attached to the flat surface of the rear panel.

The Midtec Spyder sits on a 90-inch wheel base and is only 142 inches overall. This tiny assembly has a low center of gravity mixed with a nearly even chassis balance, so it could make a great autocross racer for weekend fun.

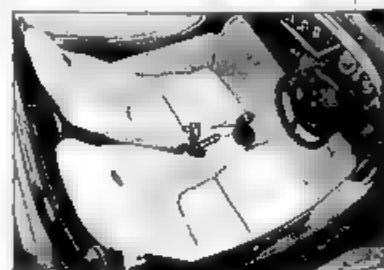
By using a U.S.-certified Escort GT motor, the Spyder could become quite a rocketship in the performance department; its power-to-weight ratio is around 12.6:1, placing it in the same class as the '92 LT1 Corvette for 0- to 60-mph times.

The Midtec should be available stateside about mid-'92, so keep an eye out for this wild little street racer. It's sure to be an easy build and a hot driver for those with an Escort to spare.—David Fetherston

SOURCES
Domino Cars U.S.A.
Dept. KC
102 New Haven Ave.
Milford, CT 06460
203/878-7352

Midtec Sports Cars
Dept. KC
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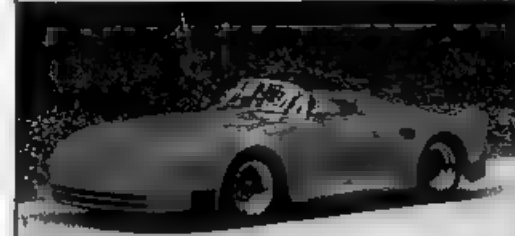
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The boys from Zender's skunk-works really opened a few eyes when they built the Fact 4 supercar two years ago. It toured the United States and Europe, making headlines all along the way (see "That's A Fact," May '91).

In addition to manufacturing aero-styling packages for production cars, Zender is a think tank of automotive ideas, and over the past eight years it has also built the Vision 1, 2, and 3.

This year Zender decided to go one better and build a Spider version of the Fact 4. This blue beastie was introduced at the Frankfurt International Motor Show last fall. Gunter Zillner once again designed the whole project using a carbon and aramid fiber for the body. His architecture remains identical across the front with the angular lines of the nose section carried over from the Fact 4 coupe. The rear section replaces the coupe's hard-lined appearance with nicely rounded surfaces that seem to create a body that flows more naturally than the previous model.



The Spider has a Targa design with a removable hardtop. This trick feature allows the windowed Targa rollbar to be removed at the break line and replaced with a full Carson-style hardtop. The convertible uses the coupe's same steeply raked windshield frame with its deep, wide base for the front support. The back section of the roof has a plug-in mount on the rear deck.

Inside the treatment is all go. Yellow leather covers the outer frames of the twin Recaro AB racing seats. It keeps over the center console, up

the door panels, and flows all over the dash in a brilliant splash of color against the blue bodywork. Zender leather-bound steering wheel and special Zender instruments fill the dash.

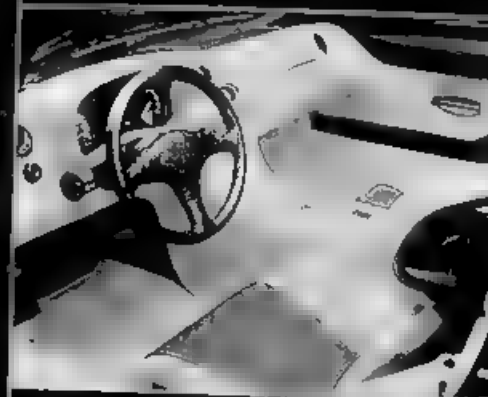
The composite body fits over a

tubular-steel frame utilizing a Porsche 928 suspension with double wishbones, coil springs, and Koni shocks. Unlike the coupe that used a very expensive autoclave-baked monocoque tub like a Formula One car uses, the Spider returns to the more conventional structuring with its steel frame.

Even with this change in structural design, Zender wanted the very best in class, so it put the chassis through the tough German TUV testing before using it in the Spider. The weight distribution is still

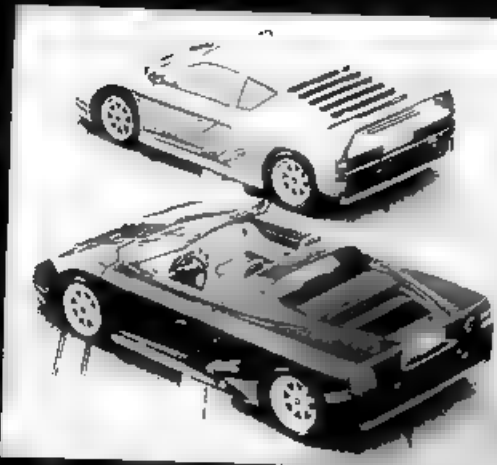
45/55, giving the chassis a near perfect balance with a fine touch-of-fun asymmetry.

The wheel package uses a set of Zender custom 17-inch three-piece wheels that are capped with ZR-rated Pirelli P Zero, low-profile tires: 225/40 front and 335/35 rear. The brakes are also the very best, featuring Brembo four-piston calipers on four-wheel discs. A five-speed ZF 5DS transaxle puts the power to the tarmac through a 40-percent differential lock.



The body features the same high-tech sandwich construction method with both carbon fiber and aramid fiber panels assembled and then processed in an autoclave high-vacuum oven. A huge weight savings is gained with this process. The doors, for example, weigh only 5½ pounds each, and the engine cover weighs 18 pounds.

While the coupe was a true 448hp bruiser with its twin-turbo Audi V8, the Spider is a little more conventional, running with a nonturboed 250hp version of the same 32-valve, four-cam Audi V8. The combination produces a 10.8:1 power-to-weight ratio. This is about three points ahead of a Corvette. Zero to 60 can be reached in 5.8 seconds, and the top speed is claimed to be 164 mph. In all, the Spider's performance is comparable to an LTI Corvette optioned with a Callaway twin-turbo package.



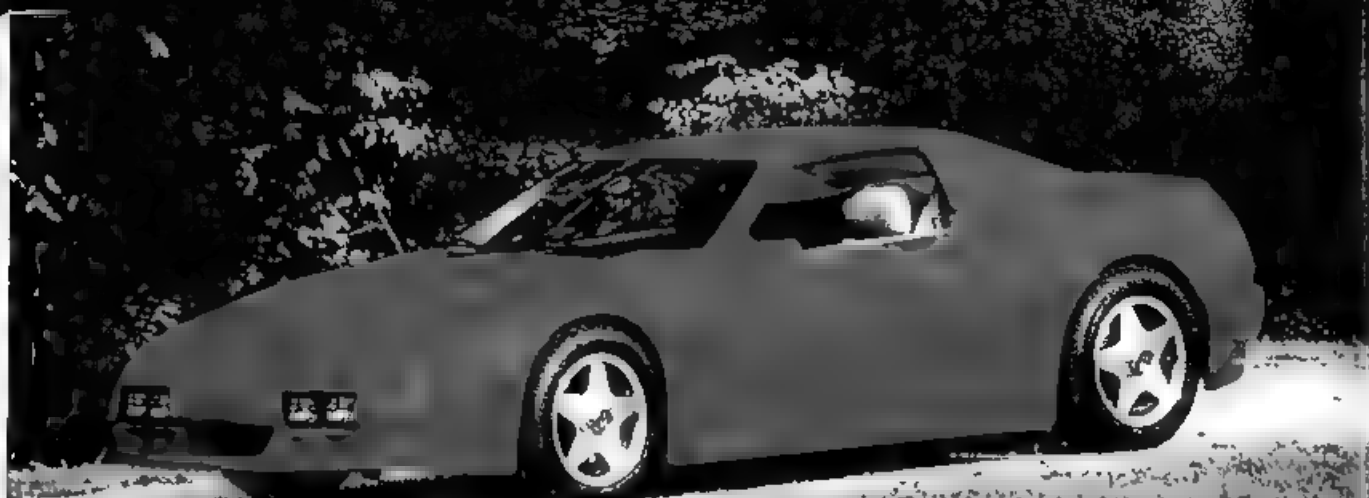
Zender keeps saying, "not yet," when asked if this wild looking German hot rod is going to become available. If you want to cast your vote for production, contact Zender North America, Dept. KC, 700 Presley Rd., Charlotte, NC 28217, 800/832-2411 or 704/525-0639 (in NC). Considering the claimer this car has created, the company would be crazy not to make this Fact 4 a fact. KC

EVEN ARACHNOPHOBIA COULDN'T
KEEP US AWAY

BY DAVID FETHERSTON

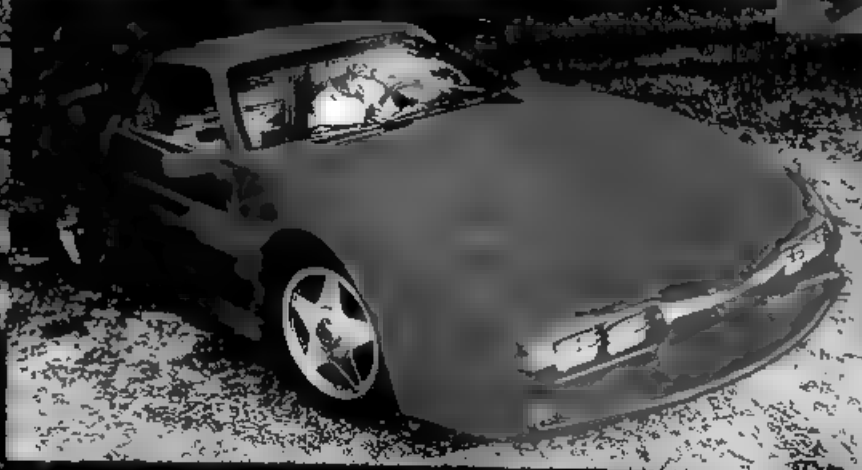


ZENDER FACT 4 SPIDER



FERRET

APTLY NAMED, IT'S LIGHT ON ITS FEET AND IT ALSO RAIDED THE HEN HOUSE OF AUTOMOTIVE STYLING



At a recent kit car show in Cincinnati, Ohio, one sporty-looking, cherry-red coupe stopped many people in their tracks. Anticipating a frequently asked question, a sign at the front of the car read: "No, this is not a Fiero." Well, if it wasn't one of the many reskinned Fieros now on the market, what was it? The

official name is Ferret, an amalgam of Ferrari and Corvette to indicate the styling inspiration. Comparisons to the sleek, nimble animal of the same name are definitely intentional. The car's components were picked from a whole slew of different parts bins. Chet Dreyer is the man who



TEXT & PHOTOS: STEVE TEMPLE



painstakingly put them all together over a period of seven years. This custom-built labor of love has proved worthy of all his attention. It has garnered no less than eight awards, the most recent being *Kit Car* magazine's Editor's Choice for Best of Show at the Cincinnati Kit Car Show.



The custom-welded chassis consists of 11-gauge rectangular steel tubing.

Dreyer says the Ferret idea arose one day while he was working on his '81 Buick Skylark. He noted that the subframe for the engine and transaxle seemed to lend itself to a midengine custom car. Dreyer and his two sons, Steve and Kurt, have built both street machines and a street rod, so this new challenge did not intimidate them.

Pencil fell to paper, and the concept drawings that developed included elements of several popular sports cars (influence, intentional or otherwise, is discernible from other designs besides Ferrari and Corvette). Happy with the basic shape, Dreyer began to ferret out parts from salvage yards that would fit in his Ferret concept. First, a Mustang II headed for the glue factory gave up its crossmember, rack-and-pinion steering, and suspension pieces, all logical and economical choices, as so many specialty car builders know. An '80 Citation awarded Dreyer with its 2.8-liter V6 and three-speed automatic. He groomed a Pinto for its windshield, and plucked the side glass and door hardware from a Sunbird. And from a recently deceased Olds, he inherited power windows and door locks.

Once all the assorted components were in hand, including lights, wipers, bumpers, and the master cylinder, Dreyer and sons set to work on the buck. Using the axles as reference points and following the scale drawings, they constructed a frame out of 2x4s and plywood over which layers of 1/4-inch plywood were then bent to form the body. This was a time-consuming process since all



Instead of clay and foam, the mold plug was constructed of 1/4-inch plywood over a frame of 2x4s.

ishing touches were 15x7-inch American Racing wheels that were wrapped with BF Goodrich Touring T/A rubber, P195/60R15 in the front and

P205/60R15 in the rear. The finished car looks great, worthy of any Detroit design studio, but how does it drive? Chet Dreyer readily admits that the Ferret was not designed to compete on the same performance level as the production sports cars that inspired it. The acceleration is adequate, considering the available power, and the steering response is extremely quick, in keeping with the car's light-footed namesake. One of the rear tie rods was a bit loose, though, so the back end felt whippy on hard turns. Dialing in this aspect of the suspension is particularly important for midengine cars, which may tend to fishtail anyway. Dreyer was aware of this fault, and says he has since corrected it. The only remaining niggle is a high noise level inside the cabin.

Aside from these minor teething problems, however, the Ferret is a remarkable example of what one family created with some ingenuity, imagination, and plenty of hard work. The Dreyers are currently tooling up for production, and both a small-block V8 and a drag-racing version are under consideration. After all, everyone knows a Ferret is meant to run wild. **KC**

SOURCE
Ferret Corporation
c/o Pro Body
Dept. KC
257 E. 32nd St.
Holland, MI 49423
616/392-4909

the mechanical parts also had to be checked for fit and function during this process.

Satisfied that all the pieces would work beneath the new skin, the Dreyers covered the wooden plug with plastic filler and sanded it smooth. A coat of black primer revealed remaining flaws in the contours. Once the form was free of imperfections, six coats of mold release wax and several coats of parting film then followed. From there, they added three coats of tooling gel and eight layers of fiberglass mat and resin. Flanges and steel tubing ensured that the molds could be removed from the plug and still keep their shape.

Once the molds were cured and lifted from the plug, they were then sanded, buffed, and coated with mold release before laying up the fiberglass. The hood, roof, hatch, and doors have both inner and outer panels, requiring two-part molds and epoxy adhesive for bending. They also have steel reinforcements for mounting hinges and the windshield pillars.

Next, the Dreyers welded an 11-gauge box-tube steel frame to fit underneath the body. In the center tunnel, they used 16-gauge steel, and also added panels for the floor and firewall. Steve Dreyer then sandblasted and painted the chassis with Acme Probase Torch Red and clearcoat. The body panels received the same coating inside and out.

After the body was placed on the frame, Randy Essenburg custom fit the gray carpet to match the factory seats from a Honda Prelude. The wiring came next, along with a host of little details such as pop-up headlights, windshield washers, and dash instruments. The fin-

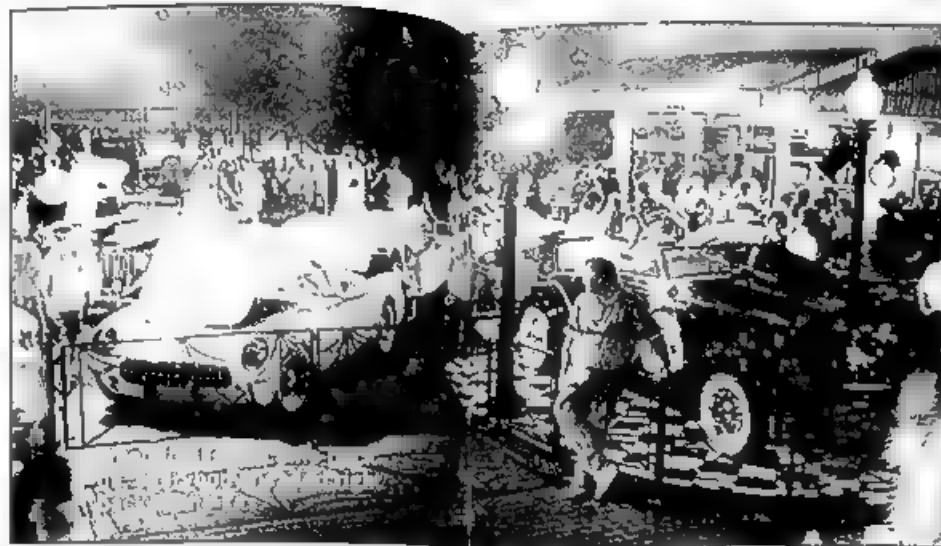


A variety of styling influences are apparent, depending on the viewing angle.

Considering all the hubbub at a recent event in Florida, it looks like specialty vehicles can really make the sparks fly at an auto show. Even with hundreds of other types of cars to inspect, the crowds clamored to see a new kit car display at Auto Fest. This three-day potpourri of street rods, custom cars, and classics—and now kits, too—is held annually in Old Town, Kissimmee, Florida. Located 2½ miles from the entrance to Disneyworld, Old Town is the perfect setting for an event of this type. It features quaint brick streets lined with trees and benches amidst specialty shops, including a general store where Coke still costs three cents. It all makes you feel as if you have stepped back

designer and builder Chuck Arnone (of Coachworks of Yesteryear) busy answering questions from dozens of people. Look for this kit to become popular since it's both well engineered and in a virtually untapped genre.

The most enthusiastically received car of the show, however, was the '33 '34 Packard replica belonging to Dwight Bond of Gibbon Fiberglass. Once Auto Fest began, it was nearly impossible to get a picture of the car without at least a half-dozen people blocking your view. Builder Dwight and his wife Sheila sat on a park bench about 20 feet from the car and watched as the throngs stopped to get a better look at this gorgeous reproduction.



KITS IN KISSIMMEE

SPECIALTY CARS HIT THE BIG TIME AT ONE OF THE LARGEST SHOWS IN THE EAST BY GERRY ASHLEY

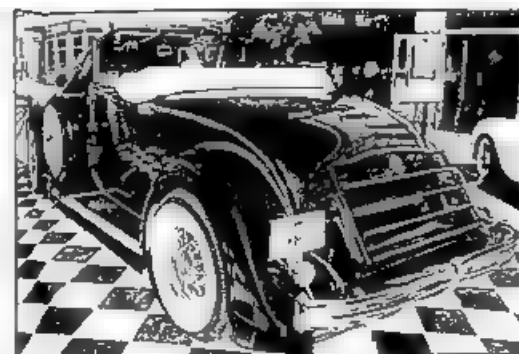
into the Fifties.

For this year's show, there were well over 1100 cars on display throughout streets in and around Old Town. Attendance at the event held last fall was estimated at nearly a half-million people, according to Old Town Special Events Director Charlotte Thompson. A spokesman for the Ocala County Sheriff concurred, adding that Auto Fest spawned the largest traffic jam he had ever seen in the area, traffic at times backed up for over six miles. Hotels in the area, normally begging for business during this post-summer period, were displaying no-vacancy signs—further evidence of the event's popularity.

The kit car industry was well represented by a number of manufacturers and private owners, including Heritage Motor Cars (Cobra and Mercedes 540K), Memory Motors, and Kit Car World ('53 Corvette replicas), Silver Arrow Motorworks (540K roadster), Italian Image (Stallion Fiero rebod), and others. Kit cars had their own display section in the midst of Old Town. Perhaps the most unusual one was a '36 Ford pickup replica that, although unassembled, drew a lot of attention and kept



Italian Image's Fiero-based Stallion prompted a lot of double-takes.



Gibbon's Packard took center stage.

A few feet away, the folks from Italian Image had nearly as many admirers inquiring about their Fiero-based Stallion, a sign that the kit cars at the show represented a well-balanced display of what's available (and desired) today. I couldn't help chuckling as I watched one person after another doing double-takes when they realized these were replicas.

In addition to the cars, the event included nearly nonstop live entertainment by some of the best-known rock and rollers of the '50s and '60s (The Coasters, The Shangri-Las, and The Drifters, to name but a few), hosted, appropriately, by the legendary Wolfman Jack.

Testimony to the strong appeal of the kit car display occurred Friday night when a three-hour power failure left most of Old Town in the dark. The crowd migrated to the section with lights, which included the stage area where the music continued uninterrupted. Eventually, the power was restored and within five minutes crowds surrounded the replicas again.

Perhaps the most important related piece of news concerning the



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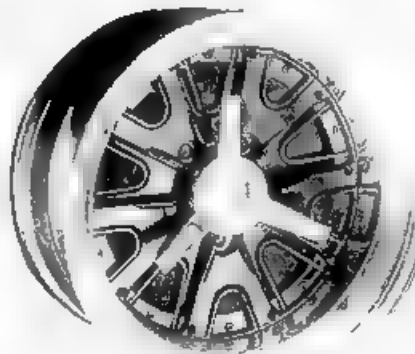
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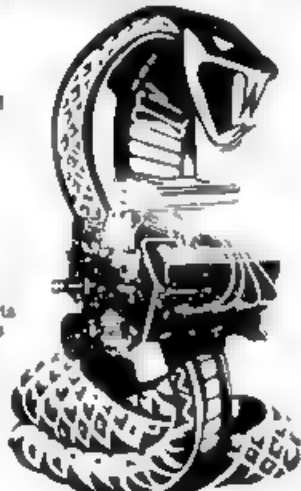
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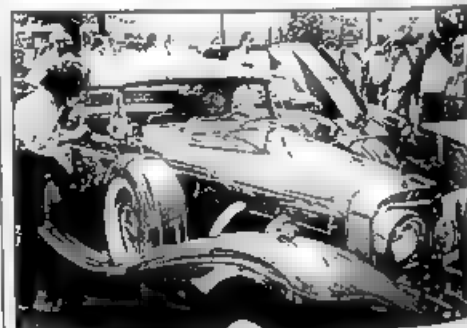


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MOTORWORKS**

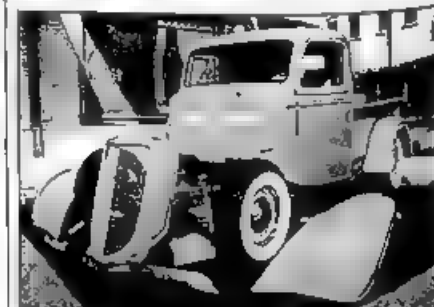
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ing of Old Town Motors, a prototype
of which we hope to see more in the
future—a showroom for the display
and sale of kit cars from numerous
vendors where potential builders
can see, touch, drive, and examine
the products before committing
themselves to such a major pur-
chase. The company is headed by
Charlotte's husband, John Thomp-
son (407/396-6277). Cathy Walker,
who coordinated the kit car portion
of Auto Fest, is sales director and
general manager, and her husband,
Jim, is the chief mechanic and tech-
nical advisor.

Not wasting any time, Old Town
Motors and the Specialty Con-
structed Vehicle Association (SCVA),
sponsored a new annual kit car
show held at Old Town. Called Win-
ter Brake, the three-day event
debuted in early February of this
year. According to Dave Radke of
SCVA, it should become one of the
premier events of the kit car indus-
try. If the event went as well as
Auto Fest, I wouldn't bet against it.

I left Orlando with a feeling of
exhilaration that no visit to Disney-
world would have provided. I'm
already making plans to attend the
next Winter Brake. In the words of
the Wolfman, "Let the good times
roll!" **KC**



Silver Arrow Motorworks showed up
with this stunning Mercedes 540K
replica, another favorite.



Chuck Arnone's '36 Ford Pickup kit,
well on its way to completion, gar-
nered praise from all who stopped to
look.

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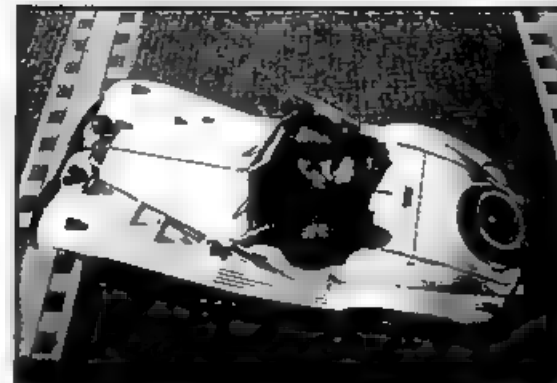
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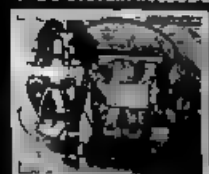
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Laurel Kallio didn't know what Cobras were when he started making windshield frames for the cars. "I was never a car buff before," he admits. During the ensuing years, though, as he continued to hand craft aluminum channel into windshield frames for a manufacturer of replica kits, he eventually was won over and became a hardcore Cobra enthusiast.

Already retired once, Lauri went on to establish MidStates Classic Cars & Parts as a respected manufacturer of Cobra replicas. That done, he's now semi-retired again—but he still shows up every day at the small plant in Hooper, Nebraska, to lend his considerable expertise to his youngest son, Bob, who now heads the enterprise with his wife, Vanessa.

Lauri Kal's long career was spent "making things with a fine finish." These items included bank and store furnishings, then pickup toppers, and even a couple of Bugatti replicas turned into salad bars for a restaurant chain.

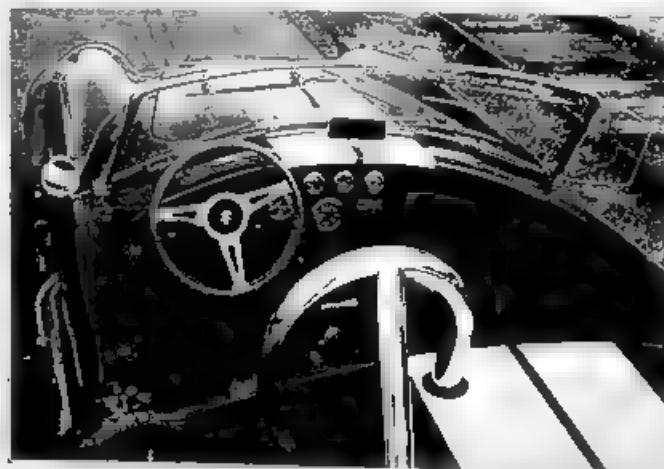
MIDSTATES' FAMILY APPROACH MAKES ITS CUSTOMERS FEEL LIKE KIN, TOO

TEXT & PHOTOS: JOHN LEE

Eventually, his involvement with Cobra components led to an opportunity to buy a fiberglass body mold that had been taken from an original Shelby Cobra. "I'd never worked with fiberglass, but I got a specialist to help me learn," said Lauri. He built his first body in June of 1982.

It wasn't up to his exacting standards, so he continued to rework and perfect the mold. Everything Lauri does has the touch of old-world craftsmanship. The son of Finnish immigrants, he speaks with a noticeable accent. (He'll tell you Lauri is a common man's name in Finland.)

MidStates now uses two molds for its Cobra bodies, one for original bodies and another for the custom model. What's the difference? According to Lauri, the original AC Ace bodies that Carroll Shelby used to build his Cobras were not formed by stamping machines, but hand-hammered out of aluminum. Thus, they didn't have the cookie-cutter sameness of assembly-line Detroit products. They weren't even perfectly symmetrical, for example, the right-side air scoop next to the grille opening



Kallio's Cobras

Family Reunion

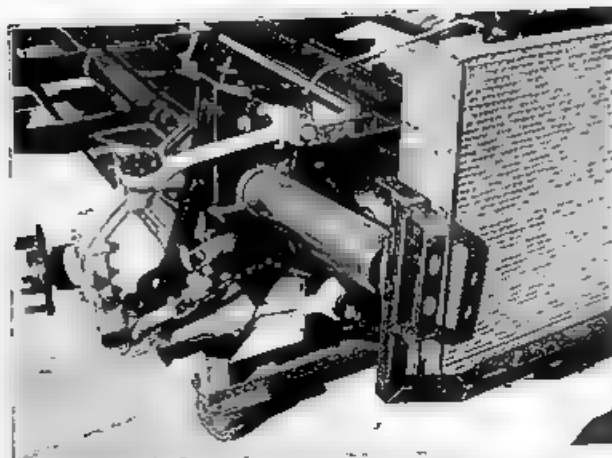
The owners of MidStates Classic Cars & Parts don't want their company to get too big. They're content to build about one Cobra body a week, several turn-key cars a year, and do the work well.

The company is situated in the village of Hooper, Nebraska, population 932, about 60 miles from Omaha, Nebraska. With Bob's wife, Vanessa, and their skilled workers happy to spend less than 10 minutes getting to work, it's a close-knit, family-type operation.

In fact, when customers buy a MidStates

Cobra kit, they're practically adopted into the family. And every fall they're invited back for a family reunion. The '91 Cobra Roundup, held last October, brought out 15 Cobras from eight states, plus two customers who took advantage of the occasion to pick up their bodies.

Several of the cars were out for the first time. The new owners were anxious to display their accomplishments. When Vic Larson couldn't leave his job on Friday to make the 500-mile drive from Denver for the weekend, his wife, Sharon, drove their Cobra solo and met Vic when he flew in that evening.



Builders who want an original-type chassis get one with four-inch round, 1/4-inch wall tube frame rails. This one is fitted with an '84 and later Corvette independent front and rear suspension with aluminum components

Front and rear frame extensions are built out of three-inch tube, and the crossmembers and outer rails are of rectangular tubing.

prevent warping in the hot sun. Steel plate and 1/2-inch thick angle iron are glassed in for attachment of hood, deck, and door hinges. MidStates caters to a variety of tastes in its running gear options, as well as its bodies. The customer can choose an original-style frame based on two four-inch round-tube main rails, or the more contemporary 2x4-inch rectangular I-tube style welded in their jigs. The frames are identical as far as interchangeability of bodies and suspen-

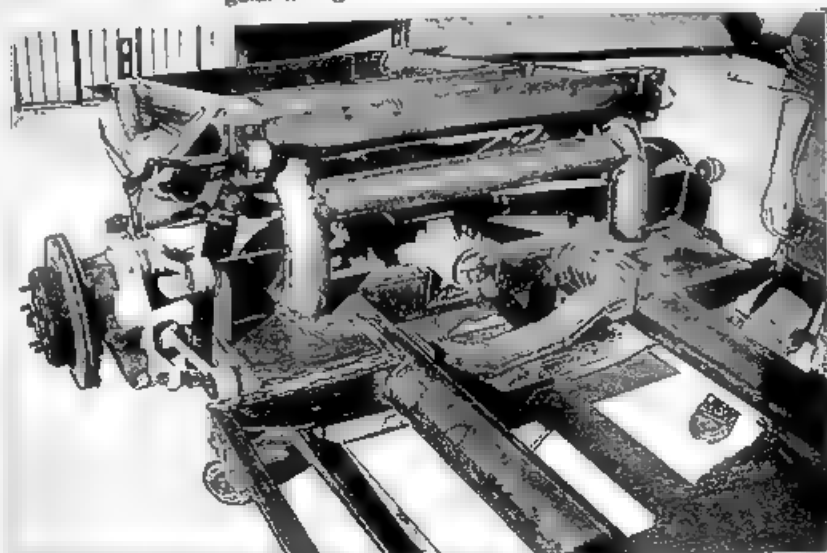
might not be an exact mirror image of the one on the left.

MidStates' original mold had those typical Cobra imperfections. But some customers complained, so Lauri said, "We went ahead and made a perfectly square and true mold to satisfy those who insist on having a perfect car." He reports that orders run about half-and-half for the two types.

Bob and Lauri Kallio believe their handlaid fiberglass, although more expensive than spraying with a chopper gun, results in more uniform and higher-quality bodies. The gel-coat is light gray primer, so customers can apply their choice of paint and striping.

They also leave the body in the mold to maintain the shape while the floor and other sections are glassed in. Then the frame is placed on the body upside down, and bolted down. This way, the Kallios contend, the body fits the frame correctly every time it goes together.

"The body you buy a year from now will fit the frame you bought a year ago, perfectly," Lauri claims



"We never change the body-to-frame relationship; the only changes are made to the outside surfaces."

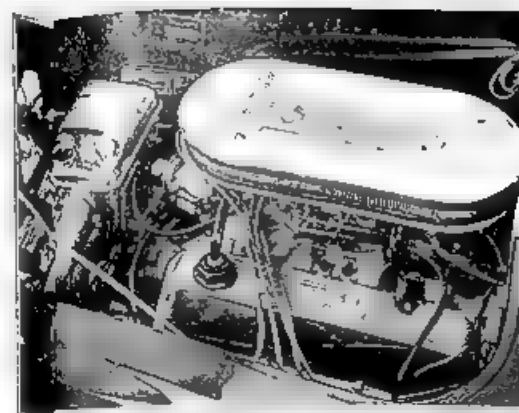
Attention to detail is also evident in other panels. Both hoods and decklids have 1/2-inch steel tubing glassed in to help them retain their shape and

sion parts.

Mustang II front suspensions and 9-inch Ford rear ends ('75-'80 Granada, Monarch, and Versailles units are preferred, because they keep the tires inside the stock wheel flares without narrowing) go into 70 to 80 percent of MidStates' Cobras.

Restaurant owner Mark Gorot grinned from ear to ear as he sat in the Cobra he picked up only the week before. After working on it for three years, "I got too anxious to get it done," he said,

so he had MidStates finish and paint it. It was open house at the MidStates plant Saturday morning with donuts and coffee, T-shirts, and drink coolers. Then Bob Kallio led the way on a poker run to nearby Fremont. Back in Hooper that evening, they fired up a giant grill down at



Bob Kallio's 351-powered Cobra also has some nitrous on tap

But the Kallios will also build chassis to accommodate Jaguar or Corvette components and aftermarket systems such as Jerry Kugel's or Art Morrison's

Many different drivetrains are also installed in MidStates Cobras. The small-block Ford is most common, but 427s, small- and big-block Chevys, even a Buick turbo-V6 and a 426 Chrysler Hemi, have found their way into the engine bay. Transmission options include automatics, four-speeds, and Doug Nash five-speeds.

Wheels are another personal choice, but the Kallios use a lot of the Halibrand-style repros by Compomotive. The wheels can be ordered in a variety of widths and offsets, including negative offset, so the tires will stay inside of the fenders even while using stock Corvette suspension

Offering such a wide range of options hardly translates into mass production, and that's just fine with Bob and Lauri. "We'd rather make 49 bodies a year and have fun than expand and make 200 and risk losing our quality control," Bob insists. **KC**

the fire hall and grilled steaks for more than 60 people. The steaks came from an Omaha company whose owner drives a MidStates Cobra.

Sunday morning, the Cobras caravaned to the Nebraska Motorplex, seven miles across the cornfields, where the company paid the entry fees for all who wanted to run their cars. Later they compared time slips and Bob Kallio presented trophies to the top three. The winner, Leo Benschotter, was driving the second MidStates Cobra he has built. He runs the Omaha shop that handles most of the company's chrome plating.

MidStates Cobra owners—just one big, happy family.

Father and Son Cobras

Bob Kallio grew up in the '60s, the era of the musclecar, when anyone fortunate enough to have a Shelby Cobra absolutely ruled the streets. On the other hand, Lauri Kallio didn't know what a Cobra was until a replica manufacturer asked him to build windshield frames for him. Understandably, Bob and Lauri, son and father, president and vice-president, respectively, of MidStates Classic Cars and Parts, have different ideas about what constitutes the ideal Cobra replica.

Bob's version (shown on the opening spread) could be considered slightly above the median on the performance scale. It's more sedate than the 427-powered monsters some replica builders insist upon, but it's still no slouch on the highway or the dragstrip. He called on Precision Engine & Machine to build the 351 Cleveland engine with 8.5:1 Sealed Power pistons, a mild Sealed Power cam kit, Edelbrock four-barrel induction, and an Accel MSD ignition. The firm also installed a nitrous-oxide system.

The power is handled by a Ford top loader four-speed with a Hurst Indy shifter, and a 9-inch Ford rear end with 3.50 gear ng. Goodyear Gatorbacks mount on 15x10 Compomotive Halibrand-replica wheels in back and 15x7 units in front. Suspension, steering, and brakes are Mustang II components.

The powertrain combination was good enough

to net Bob an elapsed time of 12.41 seconds in the quarter-mile with the nitrous flowing. That was the top time of the dozen or so Cobras running for fun, including one with a Chrysler 426 Hemi and another with quad Weber carbs on a 351C engine.

After the fiberglass body was prepped at MidStates, Matt Hoschet shot the wine man color and white racing stripes. The fiberglass bucket seats and interior panels were covered in hand-sewn black vinyl by Sky's Seat Cover Center in Fremont, Nebraska.

Bob didn't even install a radio in his Cobra—the throaty pitch of the pipes and rush of the wind are all the sound he cares to hear while he's driving.

In contrast, Lauri figures he can be a sport driving his Cobra even if it doesn't have 400 horsepower under the hood. A 302 with a four-barrel and C-4 automatic suits his driving needs just fine. After all, in tiny Hooper, Nebraska, you can be across town in five minutes on a bicycle.

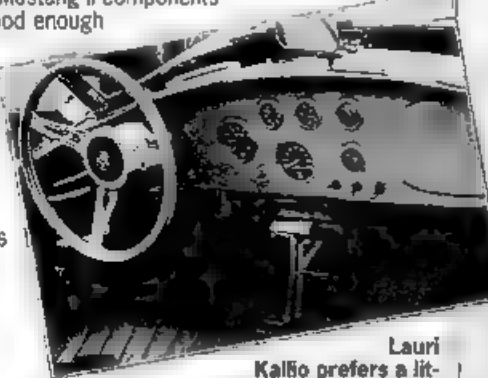
Lauri's luxury Cobra rides on a late-model Corvette independent front and rear suspension and Compomotive wheels offset to the inside to keep the tires under the fenders without narrowing the Vette suspension. He also incorporated a Vintage Air heater and air conditioning unit behind the dash, a Panasonic stereo, cruise control, and gray leather upholstery. He even drives with the top and side curtains in place some of the time.

The luxury finish on his car is a deep purple. "I know they never painted a Cobra this color," he admits, "but I like it. I always wanted a purple car." And since he started the thriving replica business after reaching retirement age, who's to argue the point?

The Kallios try to be versatile in their approach to building Cobra kits and turn-key cars. Their personal rides reflect that.

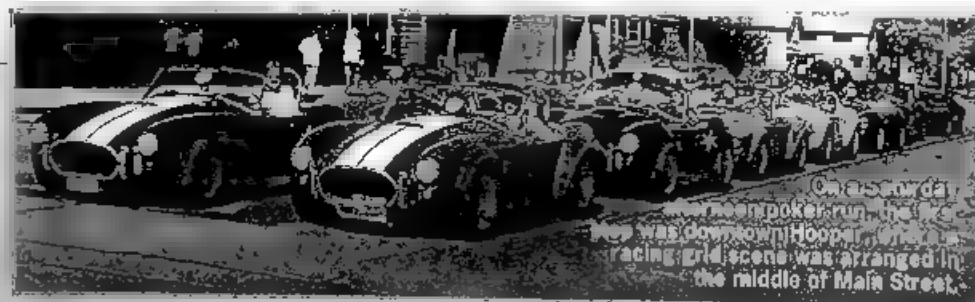


Lauri Kallio, at 74, wasn't competing for Top Eliminator; he was just having fun.



Lauri Kallio prefers a little more luxury and a little less muscle in his Cobra. The interior has gray leather upholstery, a Vintage Air heater and air conditioning unit, a Panasonic stereo, and cruise control. The suspension is Corvette, and Compomotive wheels are ordered offset to the inside to keep rubber inside the fenders without narrowing the suspension. Power comes from a four-barrel 302 with a C-4 automatic.

SOURCE
MidStates Classic Cars & Parts
Dept. KC
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Hooper, NE 68031
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Butch and Julie Stoddard drove their Cobra, finished earlier in the year, all the way from east Liverpool, Ohio. Julie has become hooked on drag racing with the 351 four-speed car and wanted to participate in the Cobra matches at the Nebraska Motorplex. "The car has 6000

miles on it already," she said. "We don't let it sit still very much."

Everyone we talked to remarked on how helpful the company personnel had been when they were building their cars, and how they remain interested in their customers.

BONNEVILLE BOMBER

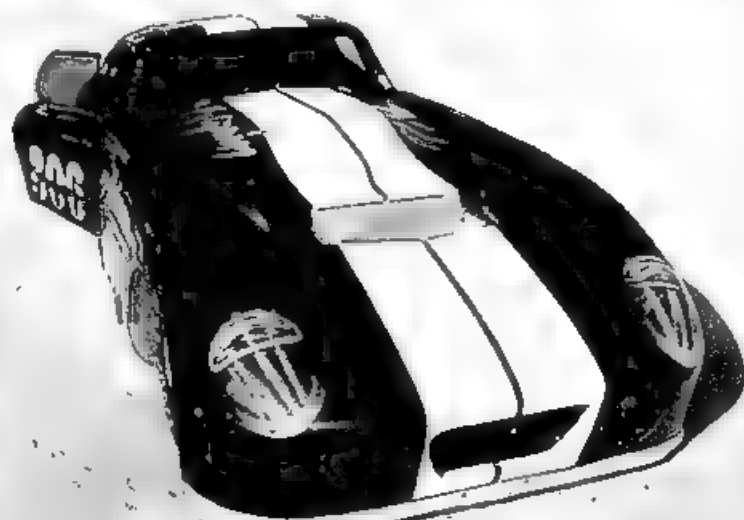
Wendover Utah—The windswept, heat soaked salt flats of western Utah sit barren and crispy white in the noonday sun. Man does not come often to this sticky salt sink. A band of speed demons, however, makes this chemical wilderness their home for several weeks each year. They are the Land Speed Racers, the men and machines that battle against the laws of physics. It is automotive competition in its purest form—racing for the glory, not the cash. There is no money to be won at Bonneville.

The Bonneville National Speed Trials is the last of the great amateur car races in the world. Andy Granatelli, Carroll Shelby, Mickey Thompson, Dean Moon, Craig Breedlove, Stirling Moss, and Phil Hill are among the famous race-car people who have been to the Salt and won.

Craig Breedlove raced one of the original Daytona Coupes on the Bonneville Salt Flats, setting a series of FIA world endurance and speed records on the old Bonneville oval track. Another coupe came back to the salt in 1991, transformed into a sleek rocketship, powered by a Ford with Monty Gatti at the wheel from Contemporary Classic Motorcars. Monty has been working on a dream for more years (and more dollars) than he cares to remember, but he finally made it to the Salt with his Daytona racer.

It sits on a custom four-inch round-tube chassis cross-braced with a 1½-inch tube and full 12-point rollcage. Its wheelbase is now 108 inches, stretched 18 inches in

A STRAFING RUN IN A 1200HP DAYTONA COUPE



TEXT AND PHOTOS:
DAVID FETHERSTON

front of the windscreen. Interestingly, it uses cross-mounted Sway Away Torsion bar suspension at both ends that can be easily tuned and adjusted for ride height and damping. The rear axle is a 2.47.1 9-inch Ford running a spool and Summers Brothers axles. Wilford disc brakes are fitted only at the rear.

The Contemporary Classic Daytona Coupe body was modified extensively for the salt racer. In addition to a stretch

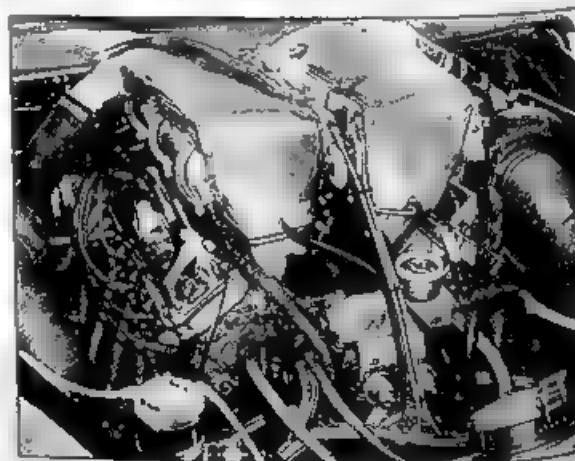
job, it features Lexan plastic windows, skirts, and molded headlights. It was painted in Shelby Racing Blue metallic with matching white stripes and graphics by Pat Luvara and Bats pinstriping.

The interior is a bare-bones racecar. "If it's needed, it's there" is the essence of this interior. Steve Badolato and Jerry Fraioli did the custom wiring and East Coast Auto Trim did the interior work for the racing seat.

Power for the Daytona comes, of course, from the Ford Motorsports parts bin. Monty used a four-bolt 351 SVO block, down sized to a 302 so he could run in the DB/Modified Sports class.

He had B&L Machine in Bronx, New York, prepare the block and then balance and blueprint all the

moving mass. The pistons are forged aluminum from Arias, running 8:1 compression with Crower rods, a Weaver dry sump oiling system, and a Hamburger's oil pan.



How about 1200 hp from a small-block V8?



Spark is delivered via a custom Fire Power ignition that is crank-triggered and uses four coils for power supply.

The head work was also done by B&L. The heads are full race prepared SVO Series B units that have been ported, polished, cc'ed, and opened out for maximum breathing.

Bonneville presents a variety of problems for racers. Its altitude, around 4000 feet above sea level, means the air gets thinner as the temperature climbs, producing an increased relative altitude that can climb as high as 8000 feet. This creates bedlam for the naturally aspirated race cars that need heavy air to gain maximum performance, so most record runs are done in the cool of the morning or under the last chill of the desert evening light.

To make up for this loss of air den-

sity and still get the maximum fuel/air delivery to the motor, Monty built a custom, twin-turbo inter-cooled Haltec/Gatti electronic fuel injection system running two injectors per cylinder off a Bosch injection unit.

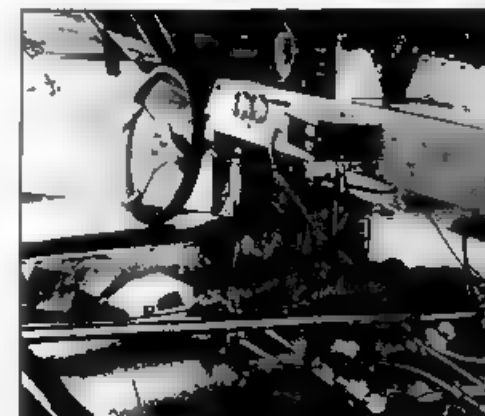
Air is fed into the down-drafted air plenums from a pair of Air-Research turbos that draw through a pair of custom water-cooled inter-coolers. This system provides the cold, fat, air charge that is badly needed for Bonneville racing engines. The result is a 300-cid engine that at 8000 rpm and 35 lbs. of boost develops an absolutely amazing 1200 hp!

Monty installed a Richmond Gear 4+1 five-speed transmission using a Center Force clutch, Lakewood bell-housing, and a custom driveshaft to take the 1200 horses down to the ground.

Bonneville is like a private club for the world's fastest custom-built cars, but its doors are open to everyone. Participants do not bring their cars here for the money, but for personal achievement. The act of making a first run or beating the standing class record is cheered on by all.

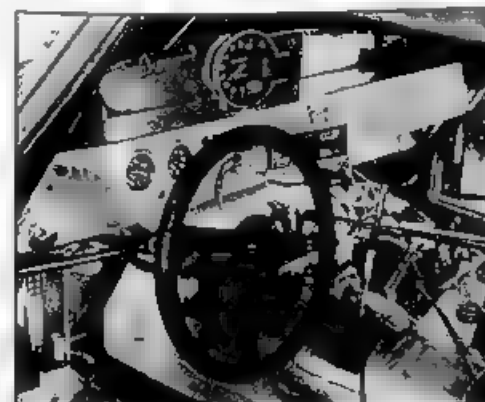
Monty did a fine job with the Daytona, running 247.52 mph through the traps in his first week ever on the Salt, besting the Sundowner Corvette's mark by more than five mph. At this rate, the mile markers rushed

past about every 15 seconds, and Monty claims the car actually felt more stable than at sub-200-mph speeds. Bonneville records are set on a two-way average, however, and Monty's return run produced later in the day came in four mph slower than the figure required due to insufficient fuel enrichment. In all respects, this was a fantastic feat for a car that has only been driven about 20 miles, all flat out, and for a driver who just turned 60. **KC**



"Only if it's needed" is the essence of this cockpit.

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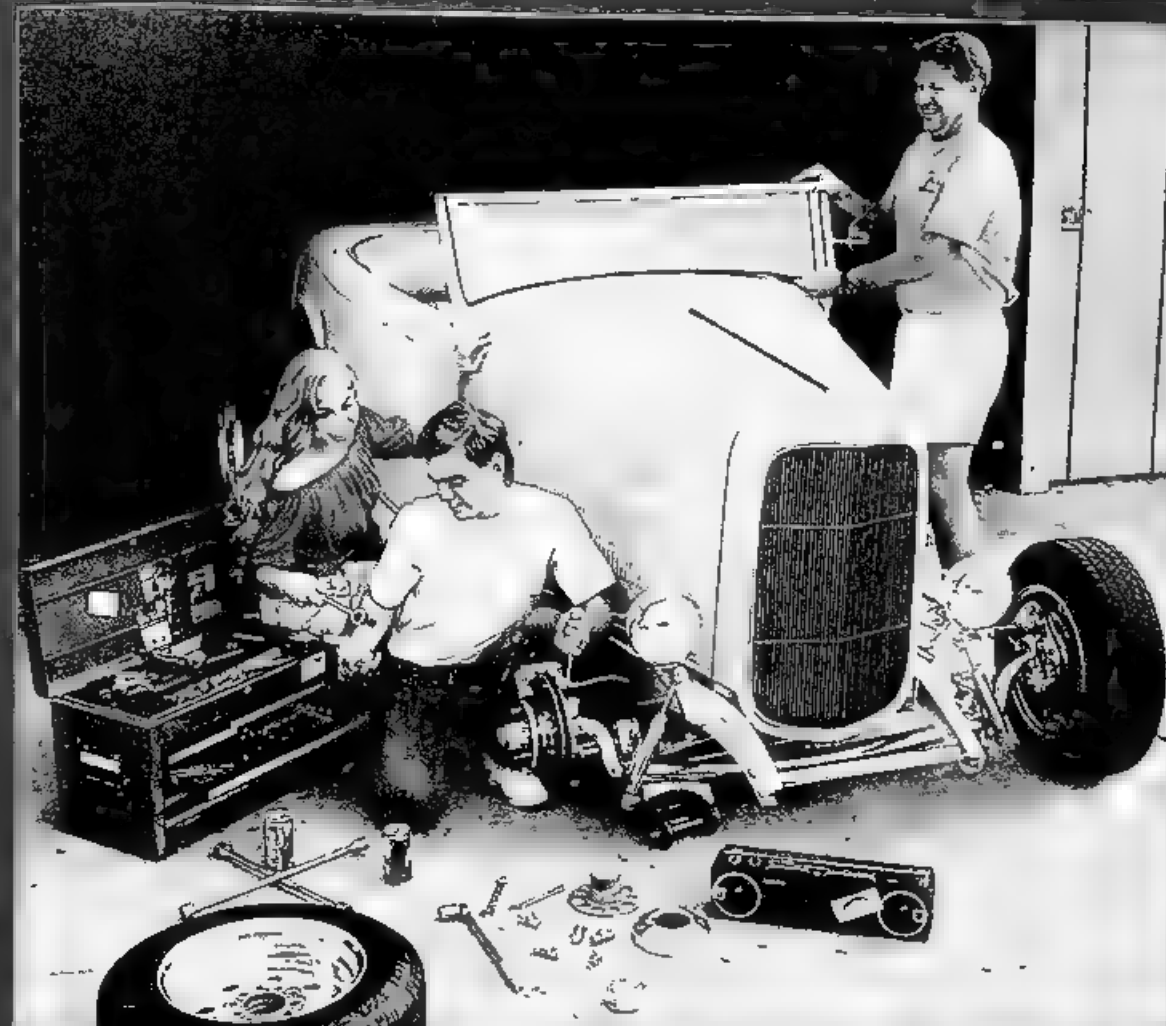
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HOW-TO HANDBOOK

TIPS FOR COMPLETING YOUR KIT



In response to numerous requests from our readers, *Kit Car* magazine is introducing a whole new tech section devoted exclusively to helping home builders complete their specialty cars. Featured in every issue, this new section will serve as a handy, hands-on reference for all sorts of kit-related subjects, such as fiberglassing, electrical wiring, drivetrain rebuilds, rebody techniques, setting up a suspension, upholstery, painting, picking tires and wheels, and even tips on insurance, registration, and financing. In short, everything you need to know about building and owning a specialty car.

Many readers have already sent in some tech tips, but we plan to run the How-To Handbook in every issue of *Kit Car*, so fill up our mailbox with your suggestions. After all, this is really *your* section of the magazine; it's an opportunity to tell others about a particularly useful product, or how you tackled an especially tough installation or used your ingenuity to create a new type of car. Please include clear photos and/or diagrams with your tech tips, when possible. If your tech tip is published, we'll give you a free, one-year subscription (or extension) to *Kit Car*. And if you're stuck on some aspect of building your car, write to Kit Tech, our Q&A column, and we'll try to find an answer. Address all mail to: *Kit Car* magazine, 8490 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069. We look forward to hearing from you!



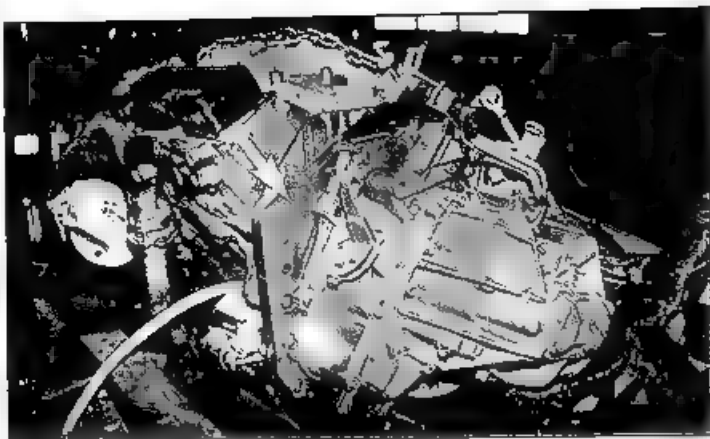
V-8 ARCHIE'S
FEROCIOUS FIEROS
STRIKE FEAR IN THE
HEARTS OF PRICEY
EXOTICS

TEXT & PHOTOS:
JIM YOUNGS



BEASTMASTER





Sure, these cars are beautiful but it is literally the power behind them that is even more enticing. Both cars are customized kits used as show-cases for V-8 Archie's Fiero engine-swap installations. They emphatically demonstrate the performance potential of V-8 power in a Fiero, and show off Archie's kit parts and pieces quite well. The cars have also become the test mules for V-8 Archie's ongoing development and prove the reliability and durability of his engine component kits. They have been run, and run hard, and they've well withstood the abuse.

Since age 14 when Archie Archambault got his first car,

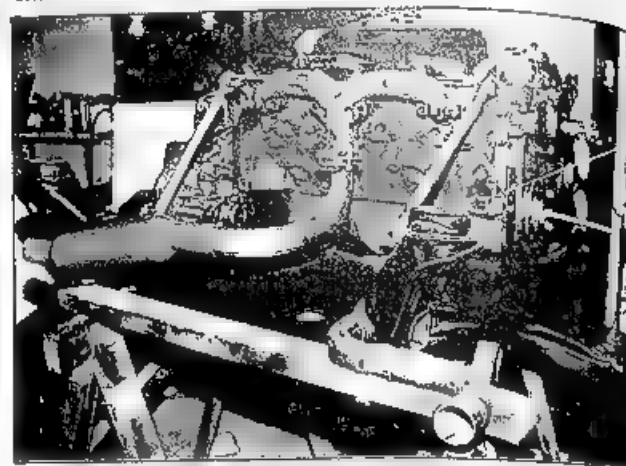
he figures he has done a V-8 engine swap of some sort on most of the 28 cars he has owned. He worked 15 years as a machinist and then quality assurance manager in the aircraft industry. He has been enamored with the Fiero since 1982 when he first read about how the car was to be built. It wasn't until 1986, however, that he acquired one. He bought the car on December 12 and had the engine removed on the 15th. It took until August 1987 before he drove his 327-cid V-8-powered Fiero for the first time. After nine months of devising the engine swap components, Archie was still concerned about whether or not the driveline components were up to the torque. Some 20,000 miles later, without anything breaking, Archie realized he was onto something good. He built three more V-8 cars and filed incorporation papers, and Mr. Archambault was in business.

Considerable improvements have been made in the V-8 Archie kits since the first car. Now any '68 or later small-block Chevy can be routinely installed in a Fiero with no frame cutting and only one small piece needing to be welded to the frame. The Archie kits come complete with all necessary parts and hardware, plus a step-by-step instruction video. These V-8 Archie kits are available for either standard or automatic transmission models and couple to stock Fiero transmissions and axle assemblies.

V-8 Archie offers kits in three phases; the Economy kit sells for

The stock Chevy water pump must be installed upside down so it fits within the Fiero's K-frame. Walls on the pulleys keep the 3/4-inch cog belt secure. Note the U-shaped bracket (see arrow) for mounting the engine.

Included in the kit is an adapter plate for mating the small-block V-8 to the stock transaxle.



Most of the engine kit's components can be bolted on while the engine sits on a stand.

\$850 and includes an engine/transmission adapter plate, mounts for the front engine, air conditioning, torque struts and starter, plus torque strut bushings, a harmonic balancer pulley, a custom flywheel, radiator hose adapters, and printed and video instructions. The Deluxe kit adds certain speed shop items such as a remote oil filter kit, a remote oil filter adapter, a Tilton starter, and a high-performance water pump drive system; it sells for around \$1350. A Master Build kit is also available, and it includes, among other things, a four-core radiator, a high-performance clutch, and custom exhaust.

Archie is thorough when it comes to instructions and technical help with the kits. He has designed and assembled his components to afford a simple and serviceable installation that an owner can be happy with from the outset. He does offer some precautions, however, that should be considered before buying the V-8 Archie kit. All small-block Chevys that use '68 and later heads can be used, but engines with an externally balanced crankshaft, like the 400-cid for example, will require a V-8 Archie balanced flywheel and harmonic balancer pulley. For '86 and later engines with a one-piece rear seal, you should add an optional Archie flywheel. Those engines with tuned-port fuel injection will need an additional wiring harness.

Once the stock engine and K frame member are removed from the rear of the Fiero and the engine is separated from the stock transmission, the assembly process is ready to begin. Archie emphasizes that most of the kit components and

reassembly can be added to your engine block with the engine sitting on a stout workbench. It sure beats leaning over a fender or lying on a creeper for hours on end.

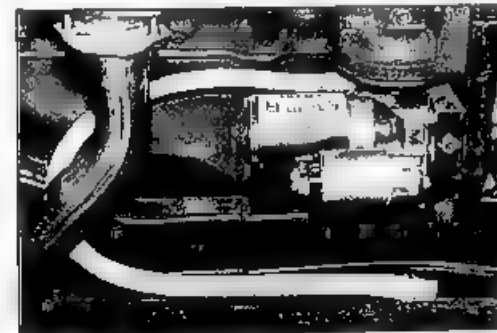
I should mention here that the following assembly explanation might incorporate more components than those included in the Economy kit, but parts and pieces can be added as necessary and as the pocketbook allows. The installation discussed here is for a standard transmission, and kits are available for automatics. Archie prefers the Isuzu five-speed Fiero tranny because of the selection of drive ratios, but the four-speed unit also works well.

Initial assembly calls for adding all the parts except for the water pump, starter, harmonic balancer pulley, flywheel and fuel pump. Since the stock Chevy fuel pump is not used, a block-off plate is bolted in place. Next the Archie engine and transmission adapter plate are bolted to the block followed by the

Stock Fiero torque struts are adequate, but new bushings are included with the kit.



To provide clearance for the axle shafts on the side of the block, a Tilton starter must be installed on the opposite side, along with a remote oil filter hose.



addition of the custom flywheel.

Archie recommends using a rebuilt Chevy water pump. Before installing the pump, two matching steam vent holes in the pump and engine block must be tapped and plugged. The reason for this is that the water pump must be installed upside down to prevent cutting a portion of the K-frame member. The pump works well in any orientation and the bolt holes will still line up properly.

Archie prefers a nine-inch clutch,

though an 8 1/4-inch unit will fit. He cautions that in some cases it may be necessary to drill the pressure plate holes a little larger to correspond with the flywheel holes. V-8 Archie offers an optional Center Force clutch designed expressly for Archie's V-8 engine swap kits. The clutch has relocated release levers, among other things, aimed at curing chronic Fiero clutch jitters. The harmonic balancer pulley is added to a point where the face of the pulley will be within 3/32 inch of the end of the crank.

So that the axle shafts can pass alongside the engine block, the stock starter is removed and a new Tilton starter is added with the proper mounting hardware to the opposite side of the block. Before the starter is mounted, however, both it and the remote oil filter cover and assorted plumbing need to be installed temporarily and tested for proper fit. Then they can be tightened down permanently according to the instruction manual.

To obtain adequate clearance for the transmission, the two mounts must be modified. The smaller hole in the rear mount must be enlarged and the slots on the front mount have to be elongated by a half-inch to the left. Install the new throwout bearing,

which is supplied with the optional Center Force clutch components, to the transmission and bolt the transmission to the adapter plate already installed. Now the

engine and tranny are ready for fitting and checking of proper clearances and alignment prior to final installation.

With the front motor mount (actually the left side now that the engine has become a transverse powerplant) already bolted to the belt side of the engine, the next move is to locate the proper position of the angle-iron mount that must be welded to the K-frame. Archie has clearly outlined the proper alignment procedures and measurements



For \$1350, V-8 Archie's deluxe engine kit includes some speed-shop items such as a Tilton starter and also a high-performance water pump drive system.



The Master Build kit adds a four-row radiator, a high-performance clutch, and a custom exhaust (not shown).

so that the lower mount can be easily welded. The lower mount can be bolted in place temporarily and welded to the frame member later. During the trial alignment phase, Archie recommends watching clearance in the areas of the harmonic balancer pulley and tail of the transmission in relation to the fuel and brake lines and the forward valve cover in relation to the decklid hinge. It may be necessary to trim the underside of the right decklid hinge box for proper clearance.

The rest of the installation procedure is mostly trial fitting of the parts and pieces not assembled earlier to ensure proper clearances. For example, Archie employs a custom water pump drive pulley and associated lower pulley for which some of the inner fenderwell will need to be trimmed for proper clearance.

The V-8 Archie water pump and pulley system is particularly effective in keeping a small-block properly cooled. Archie additionally recommends using his four-core radiator in place of the stock Fiero unit. The stock piece has very small tubes

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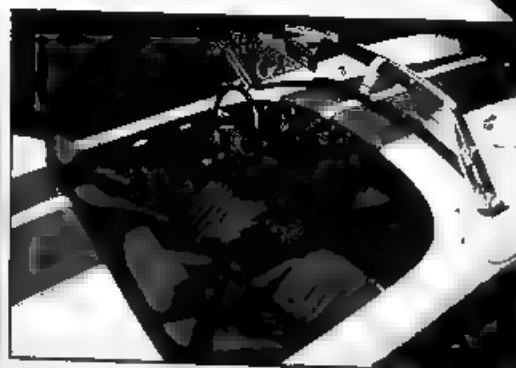
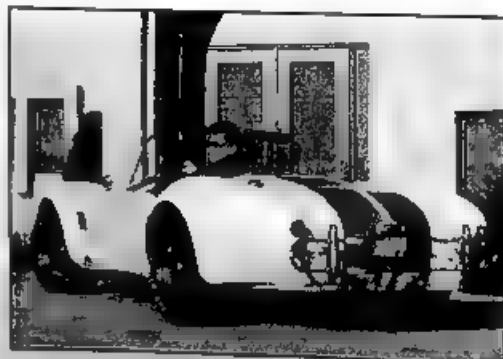
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and plastic tanks and is barely adequate even for stock motors. Archie has found that when his water pump is used with a stock radiator, too much pressure is produced. Archie's pulleys use a 3/4-inch cog belt and have walls so that the belt will not slip off. In the final assembly of the belt components, once the belt alignment is ensured according to the directions, the shaft from the harmonic balancer must be cut off.

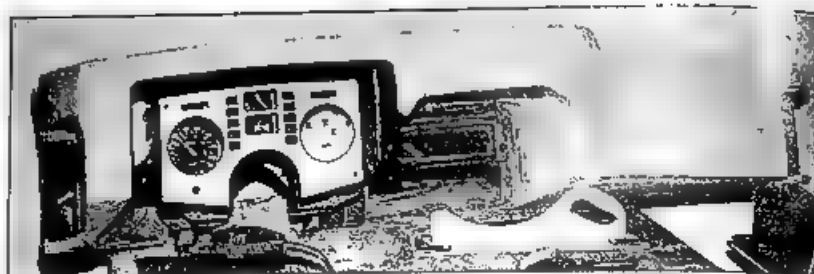
Stock Fiero torque struts can be used with the addition of new strut bushings included in the kits, but Archie is currently working on adjustable torque struts. The new struts will require brackets to be welded onto the frame for proper installation, but Archie has found that the stock units work adequately with most engines.

V-8 Archie does not offer complete exhaust systems as part of the kits, but the company has optional custom systems and will aid engine swappers with proper systems to fit. Archie suggests installing the exhaust prior to final lifting of the engine and frame into the engine bay. By doing so, you can ensure adequate room for axle shafts and the like.

From this point, once the K-frame and engine assembly have been reattached and the suspension components have been secured, the rest of the project is putting things back in working order. Included in this final stage is installing the water pump pulleys, locating the battery mounting position (Archie has a provision for relocating the battery to the front of the car), reconnecting the rest of the cooling system, and reconnecting the fuel and electrical systems. There are some variables here depending on the engine used, carburetion, and exhaust systems. Archie's experience can help, and he seems more than willing to offer advice and tips on every aspect of the project.

V-8 Archie even offers the service of converting the stock Fiero tachometer so that it will work with the V8 package. As this is being written, Archie was also in the final development stages of a stock speedometer conversion that will include a new V-8 Archie, 200-mph gauge face. Stock wiring is retained through the onboard computer with the exception of having to route the air conditioning wiring around the computer.

The two V-8 Archie installation showcases neatly exhibited the swap possibilities, and both cars were 50 KIT CAR

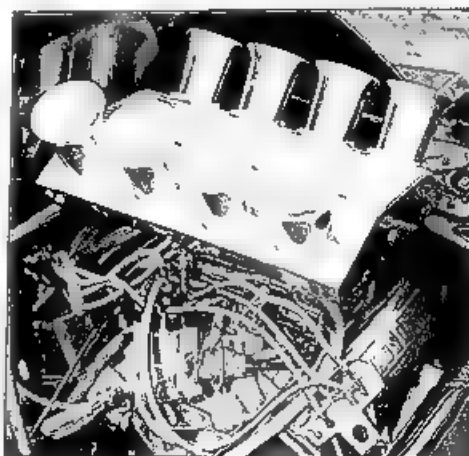


A new dash design is in the works.

more than up to the performance task. It was really satisfying to just touch the throttle and instantly get a kick in the seat. Everything worked quite well on these cars even though they have seen plenty of hard use and lots of miles. V-8 Archie kits have become common in some of the upscale kit cars being churned out today, in addition to do-it-yourself Fiero rebody projects.

Archie's showcars include a Fejer Mirage (see "Canadian Conversion," Nov '91) built on an '85 Fiero GT chassis. The 355-cid small-block churns out about 300 hp and is coupled to a stock four-speed tranny. The car has a complete Herb Adams suspension system featuring a 1 1/2-inch front swaybar, a one-inch rear swaybar, and KYB shocks all around. The coil springs were cut (1/4 inch from the front and 1/2 inch from the rear) to reduce the ground clearance, and the front steering stabilizer was removed. The car rides on 16-inch Compomotive wheels shod with Michelin P255/45R16 rear tires and P235/50ZR16 front tires.

The other car with the oversize spoiler has an imported body that displays a heavy Italian influence. Archie likes this design mainly because the whole rear of the body raises aft to completely expose the V8 engine installation. Pushing the car is about the same engine as the Mirage, a 350-cid Chevy over-bored slightly and pumping out about 300 horsepower. It features an Edelbrock Performer intake manifold with an Edelbrock 600-cfm carb sitting atop. An ersatz velocity-stack air cleaner tops off the package to provide a performance illusion for the engine bay when seen through the vented rear window. Like the



The velocity stack is actually an air cleaner, but it looks great under the transparent acrylic hatch.

Mirage, 16-inch Compomotive wheels are used, 11 inches on the rear and eight inches on the front. Front tires are P235/50ZR16s and the rears are monster P315/40ZR16s. Suspension components include a 3/4-inch rear swaybar, urethane bushings all around, and a stock front swaybar. Urethane control arm bushings were added with KYB gas shocks at all four corners.

The sound and the fury is an important part of kit car building, particularly if cars like the two shown here are in the ultimate plans. A car that looks this good has to perform and perform dependably. To be sure, V-8 Archie has discovered a niche and fills it nicely with a package that delivers in spades. Archie is additionally proud of the fact that he stands behind his work. He doesn't hide behind post office boxes and answering services. He's accessible and ready and more than willing to make sure every installation is satisfactory.

Ahhooooo! Werewolves of South Bend. Beware of the bite from these hairy monsters. **KC**

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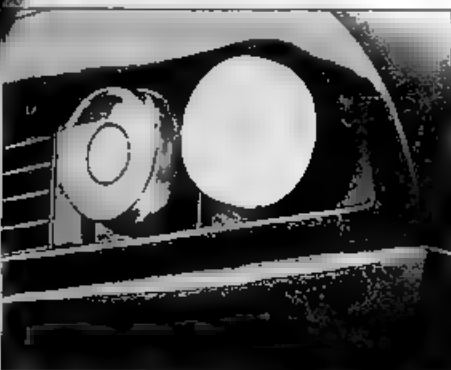
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HOW-TO Handbook WIRED!

TURN-SIGNAL TIPS

Most of us kit builders, at one time or another, have found that perfect light for our car. We want this light to work as both a running and turn-signal light, but then we find that it is too small or that it is unable to accept a double-filament bulb and socket. So, if we decide to use it, we hook it up to do only one of the two functions. We all know a single-filament light can't perform two functions. Well, here's a way to make these lights do both jobs.

Figure One shows how to hook the system up if single-filament lights are being used on the front and double-filament lights on the rear. Most fuse blocks, both factory and custom, have one flasher before the turn-signal switch.



For this system to work, the turn switch must come directly from a fuse. The wires that would normally go from the switch to the lights now must activate the coils in the relays and supply the flashers. Note that you'll need two flashers for the front lights. This is to separate the dash-indicator lights. If you're using only one dash light, the switches make contact with the front and rear lights at the same time. Since we removed the flasher from the turn switch, we now have to add one to the rear. Also, the wire from the brake switch will have to be changed from the turn switch to the static side of the relays.

We used GM air-conditioning relays (GM part No. 526896) because they are easy to find at any junkyard for a buck

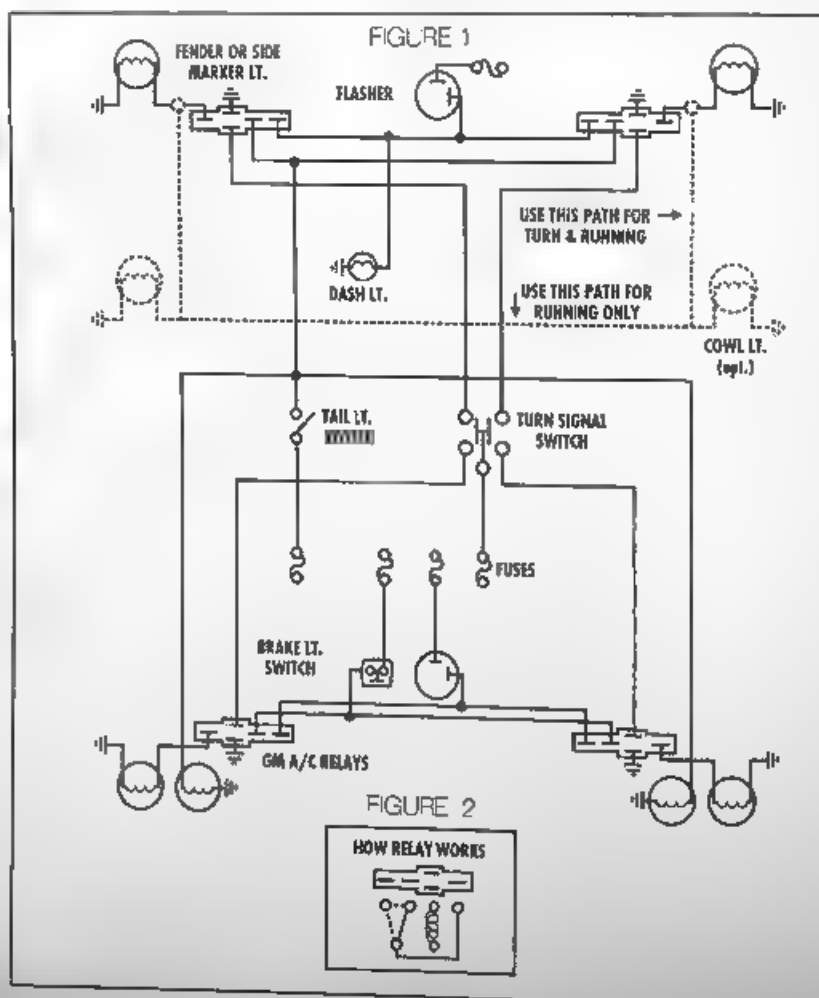
52 KIT CAR

or two. These are single-pole, double-throw relays. In other words, they switch a common terminal from source A to source B. If you're tight on space, you can find this same type of relay in some foreign cars (mostly English, German, and French). The European relays are usually only one inch square by one or two inches high.

Try to use all the same flashers in the system. Part No. 552 flashers seem to work the best for low-wattage bulbs and aren't too dependent on the number of lights operated. You'll find that because of the separate flashers, the front and rear lights flash at different rates. This shouldn't be a problem, as you normally can't see them both at the same time anyway. If you have a hazard button on your column or even on the dash, it

should work just fine. All the lights will flash. Again, because of the separate flashers, they will flash at different times. You will actually attract more attention than if all the lights were going on and off at the same time.

Figure Two shows basically the same system, only using single-filament lights all the way around. Note that on the rear you'll have to use a separate bulb for running and turn-stop functions. We've shown this setup with one dash light, but you can use two (as in the front half of Figure One). If you want, you can run double filaments on the front and singles on the rear. The cowl lights can be hooked to the running lights or put on their own switch. Take your time, and you can make your lights work any way you want. Have fun!—Allen Riderhoff

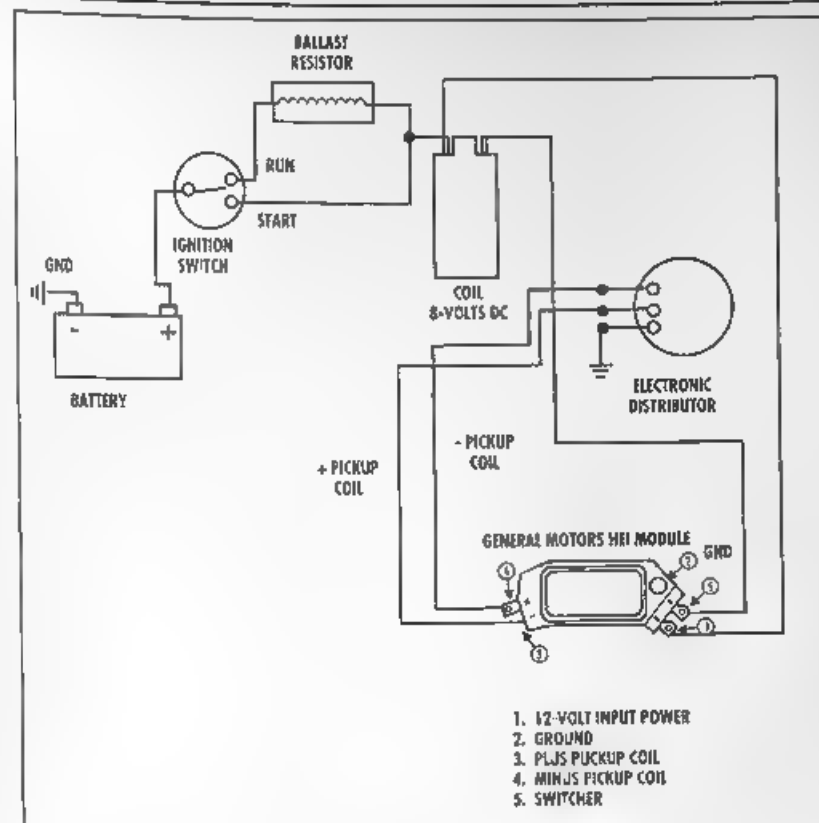


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If this cannot be done, find a cool location such as up front near the fan, and mount the module on an aluminum heat sink available from your local electronics store. (Excess heat will burn out the HEI module.) If you use 18-gauge wire or heavier for long



distances to reduce voltage drop, there will be no loss in performance (keep it dry). If the engine runs funny and will not accelerate and the timing will not advance

smoothly, reverse the connections on the plus and minus pickup coil wires. When the engine runs smoothly, set your timing and lock down the distributor.—Rod Bice

POINTS OF LIGHT

A QUICK WAY TO PUT SOME DASH IN YOUR DASHBOARD

Are you ready to think about the type of lights you'd like to use on the dash of your totally trick ride? You may want to try out this new alternative to bulb-activated dash lights that uses fiber optics. You may have seen the executive toys that make use of this concept, but if you haven't, it's simply the conduction of light through plastic wires. As with the conduction of electricity through wire or soda through a straw, light is transferred from one end to the other, allowing you control of the size of the exiting emission. This way, you can install a dash bulb of any size and still control the output of light, forming a small pinpoint with illumination equal to a bulb

The fiber-optic dash lights are made by StreetWorks, and the pinpoint they put out measures only 1/16-inch in diameter, making them the smallest lights available. Installation is relatively simple especially if your dash is still in the process of being completed. Even if your dash is finished, they can still be installed, but the company warns you to



This is how the triple-function {three-bulb} unit looks when it arrives. Everything you need is provided, as well as detailed installation instructions.



The desired placement of each strand is located and marked. It's important to have a flat area behind each one for mounting eyelets.

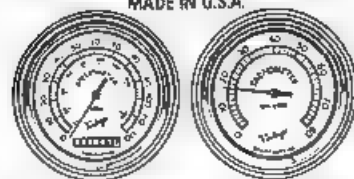
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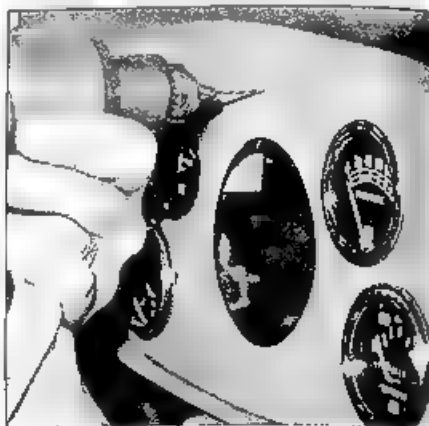
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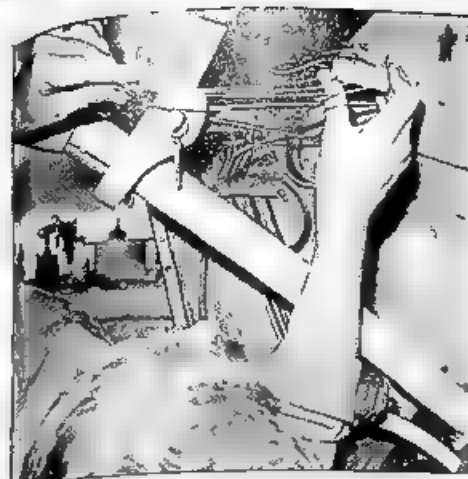


Drill a 1/8-inch-diameter hole all the
way through for each strand. If the
dash is already finished, extra care
must be taken to get a clean, straight
hole



The final position of the
mounting eyelets is
determined by the
thickness of your dash.
Then the eyelets are
lightly crimped into
place. A trial fitting will
ensure a perfect flush
mounting.

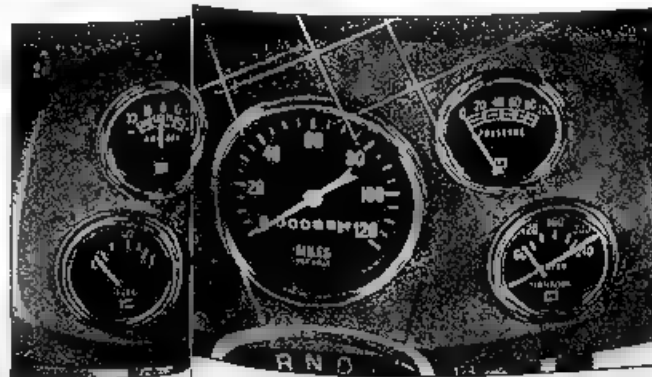
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Here the manifold unit is located
behind the dash. Make sure to check
the strand routing and all locations
prior to proceeding to the next step



Apply a quality adhesive to each
strand at the eyelet and bond it into
place from the rear. Connect the
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RADICAL Restylin'

By Evan Griffey

You've spent all those hours building a kit car, but the other car in your garage, your daily driver, still resembles countless others pumped off the production line. Why not spice it up with a ground-effects package? The right kit can transform a ho-hum sedan into a real head-turner. Installation is a walk in the park for a seasoned kit car builder, and for those who've never built a specialty vehicle, aero styling kits can serve as a stepping stone to bigger projects. The application of body pieces such as fascias, air dams, and side skirts familiarizes a beginner with some of the methods and materials he or she will handle on complete kit cars. Let's look at the types of aero packages that

are available and their impact on performance and appearance. We'll also discuss the latest in materials technology and installation procedures.

It's staggering to see how many aerostyling products are on the market. There are enough to enhance most any curve on a car, van, or truck. The front

of a vehicle can be dressed with a simple air dam extender or replaced with an entire wild-styled, front-end fascia. Other types of pieces include side skirts, spoilers, fender flares, wings, visors, hoods, scoops, and bumper covers. These pieces can be bought separately or in package form. However, the

latter usually offers a more integrated appearance. As Erik Cutter, president of Kaminari, points out, "Well-thought-out aero components should look and 'feel' like they belong to the original design enhancing it, as opposed to looking like hitchhikers on the quarter panels."

The performance value of aero treatments usually isn't evident until you're traveling about twice the national speed limit. Kaminari's version of the Nissan 300ZX is one example of how aero treatments can improve aerodynamics. This kit routes air under the body using an air dam and a special belly plate, while an elongated wing uses the air flowing over the car to create enough downforce to stabilize the vehicle at high speeds. Without the kit, the Z-car ran 186 mph in time trials, but the test driver struggled with squirrely handling. Even though adding the wing lowered the top speed to 181 mph, the steering response improved quite dramatically.

For passenger cars at legal highway speeds, however, aero kits do little to enhance performance; they are largely for visual impact. Think of them as Michael Jordan does about his Nike basketball shoes: "They don't make me play better, I just look better doing it."

Improved Materials

Fiberglass is the tried-and-true standard of aero kit materials. It has paved the way for the evolution of body kits, ultimately leading to new and improved plastics. Since fiberglass is easy to manipulate and inexpensive to produce, it's a natural for aero kit applications. Easy manipulation means that side skirts and air dams can be constructed to the tolerances needed to ensure a tight fit.

The key to good fiberglass body

pieces is the mold. If the mold is constructed of high quality and the layup is done with care, fiberglass components can compete with the new-breed plastic compounds in terms of overall looks and fit. The flip side of the coin is that body pieces manufactured from poor molds can result in major headaches. You can waste a lot of time sanding or reworking a sloppy fiberglass part. So a little legwork searching for well-engineered parts will pay big dividends.

Durability is critical in aero kits. Fiberglass is rigid and prone to chipping when hit by road debris. It's a brittle material, so pulling into steep driveways requires the skills of Minnesota Fats lining up a three-ball combination. For these reasons, fiberglass works better on wings and side skirts than on air dams. However, it is easy and inexpensive to repair. Since it has been around for decades, installers and body shops are familiar with it.

Urethane is a generic name for a clan of plastic compounds also used in aero kits. Formulated for excellent impact resistance, this material works well in

complete overlap situations where the custom piece covers an OEM panel or fascia, like a side skirt or a bumper and air dam treatment.

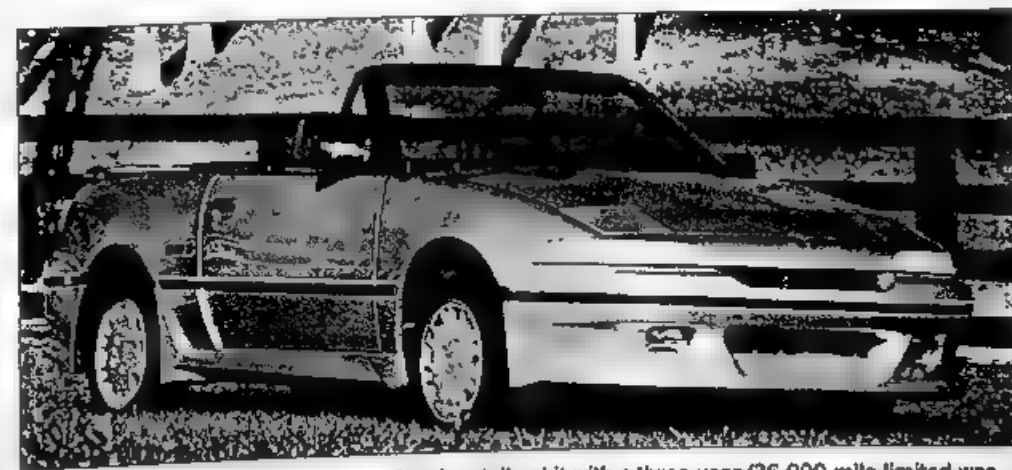
Painting this hybrid plastic can be an involved process. Because some urethanes use a silicone mold release, and since paint and silicone mix like oil and water, each part must be vigorously cleaned. Some manufacturers have developed a dry mold-release that quickens this process. Paint adhesion is also improved by adding a flexing agent to the paint. Damaged parts can be repaired by applying flexible adhesives or by using a hot air gun to mend cracks.

Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) is one of the most advanced plastics currently on the market. However, there is a difference between ABS and the material used in the manufacture of aero kits. Pure ABS lacks flexibility and thermal stability, so it tends to warp in extreme heat and becomes brittle when the temperature nears freezing. To cure this ailment, polycarbonates are mixed with ABS to chemically "dial in" the



Even everyday people-movers like the Ford Aerostar haven't escaped the restyler's attention. This kit from A&A Specialties combines urethane body pieces with aluminum running boards to set the van apart from its stock siblings.

Pacific Auto Accessories' package uses Roval to enhance the body lines of the Pontiac Firebird. The nose treatment and side scallops give it a European flair.



Razzi Corporation backs its Mercury Capri restyling kit with a three-year/36,000-mile limited warranty. The company has a toll-free installation help hotline for do-it-yourselfers.

des red fiex b ity-to-strength ratio. With a practically limitless number of possible chemical formulas, the list of patented ABS blends is as long as a line at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The two most popular ABS/polycarbonate derivatives in aero pieces are Dow Chemical's Pulse, used by Kaminari, and Rovel, used by Pacific Auto Accessories. Parts made with these materials work best as replacement fascias because they meet OEM standards in overall fit and finish and impact resistance. Polycarbonate derivatives are very receptive to paint. "Rovel requires very little preparation and no primer, and that's a big point," says Sandy Kocsis of Pacific Auto. "The less prep work before the paint is sprayed, the more time and money the customer saves."

Picking The Right Parts

The old adage, "You get what you pay for" holds true in the aero kit market. If a kit is "too inexpensive to be believed" it's usually just plain cheap. Shop around and find three or four kits that represent the look you want your vehicle to have. "You want to find a company that's here today and is going to be here tomorrow," says Kocsis. "Ask around, get references from the company. If someone calls us, our sales line can suggest companies to call and get references on the product in question."

In some cases, the material that is used can directly impact the quality and price of the part. Cutler says, "Automation means savings. Because it is hand-laid, the reproducibility in fiberglass is more varied and less controlled. The other materials (urethane and ABS/polycarbonates) are automated. So you get less labor intensity, which translates into higher product quality and consistently less cost."

It's also wise to ask about warranties. If a company isn't willing to back its product, you should keep looking. It's a "buyer beware" market, so read the fine print. When looking at warranties, don't be scared off by companies that include clauses about installation. Proper installation is vital to the long-term health of any aero kit.



One of the latest restyling kits on the market is Razzi's Grand Knight for the '92 Pontiac Grand Am.

A Few Tips On Installation

For the most part, installing an aero kit is a fairly straightforward procedure. Aero components are secured to a vehicle with adhesive tape, sheetmetal screws, and/or rivets. The most important step in the installation process is lining up the pieces. If a screw-on piece is not properly prefitted, you may have to drill extra holes. This trial-and-error method can leave the underlying sheetmetal looking like Swiss cheese. Also, be careful not to over-torque mounting screws because they may damage the finish or crack the component.

When installing a multipiece kit, start with the rear valance panel or rolled pan first. This allows you to line up the side skirts with a common measuring point, ensuring a uniform fit.

Adhesive tape is a scarier proposition because if you mess up, it is difficult if not impossible to separate the aero piece from the car. We're not talking about regular Scotch tape here; this stuff is the heavyweight champ of the tape world. The development of tape fasteners has not only helped secure aero parts, but has also helped the visual impact. "The kits have come a long way," says Kocsis. "Back in the '70s there were screws all over them, you could see them. With tape you can secure the piece and retain the smooth lines of its original design."

Here's a tip when using adhesive type fasteners. First align the aero piece, then take some masking tape (two-inch width preferred) and apply half of the tape to the aero piece and half to the car body. The tape acts like a hinge and allows you to stand back and check the overall alignment. Adjust the piece and mark the mounting point on

the body. Peel off the adhesives protective strip and press the aero piece into place.

Once you've installed all the pieces, you may want to lower the suspension for an even sportier look. Know when to say when, though, so you don't end up "gilding the lily." With the right amount of aero styling, that plain-vanilla production car will have some real spice. **KC**

SOURCES

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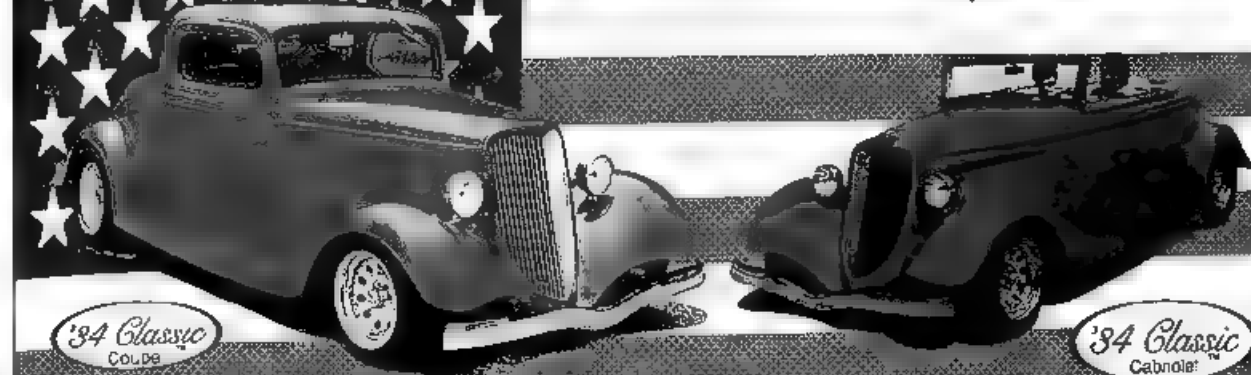
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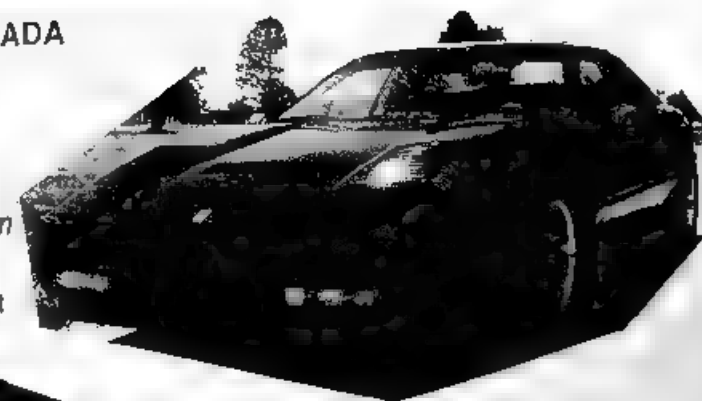
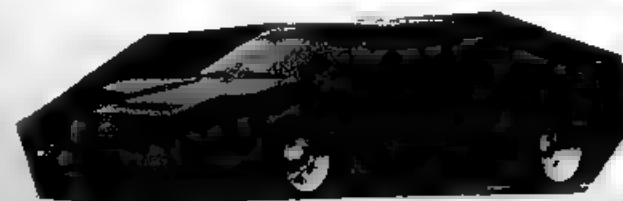
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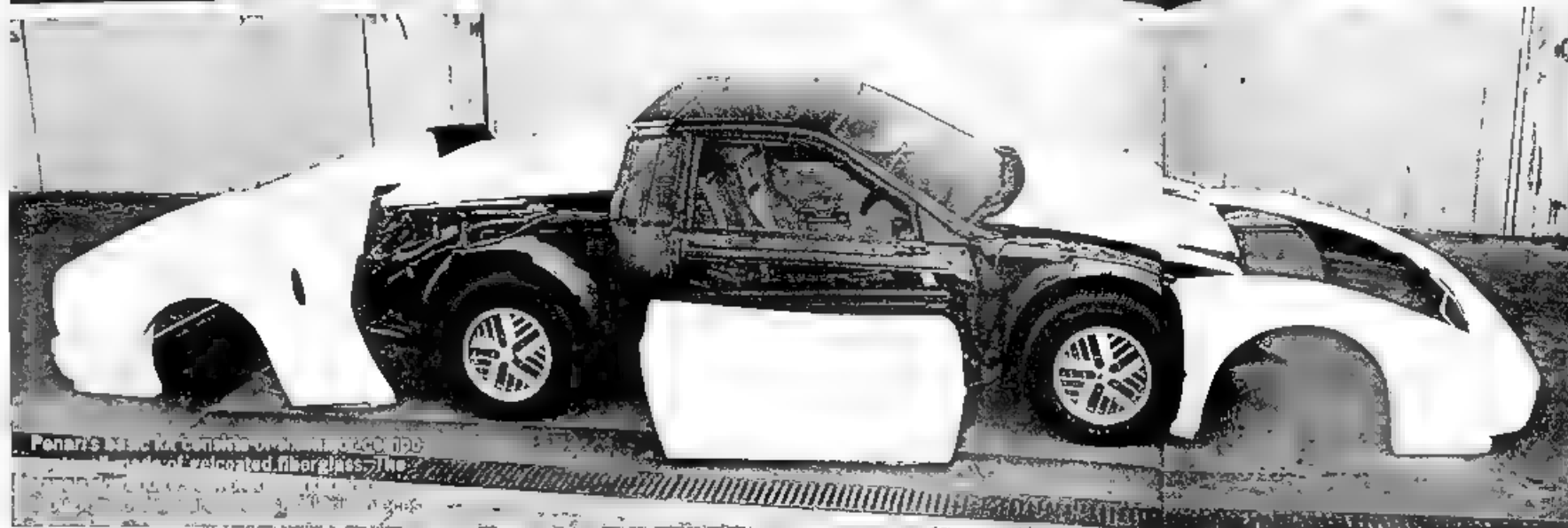
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STEP BY STEP



Ponari's kit contains everything you need to replace the fiberglass body panels on a Fiero.

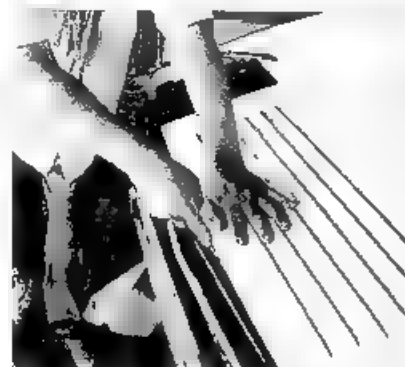
Not all Fiero rebody kits are alike, but the process of replasticizing a Pontiac is fairly simple. Due to the car's unique method of construction, all of the major body panels simply unbolt and then can be replaced with new body work that markedly alters the car's appearance. Of course, saying it and doing it are two different things, so we decided to document the process of installing ZMC's Ponari kit. This package is neither the easiest one we've seen, nor the most challenging, but ranks as a medium-difficult project for

someone who's good with his or her hands. Some of the components went on more easily than we expected, others required a fair amount of skill and finish-work. On the whole, though, the entire project went smoothly. An inexperienced kit builder should be able to strip a Fiero in a day or less, install the panels in another day or so, and then spend a third day smoothing out any rough edges in preparation for paint. If you'd like to know more about ZMC's Ponari, see "Cheap Thrills" elsewhere in this issue. **KC**

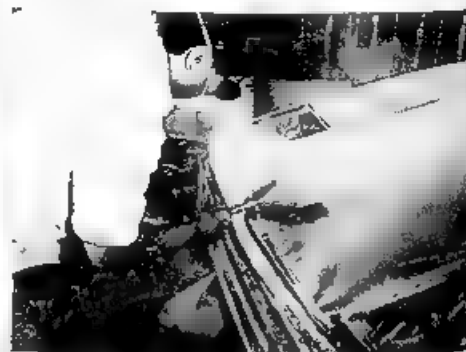


All of the Fiero's body panels must be removed first, except for the front and rear hoods and the roof panel. Also remove external hardware such as the door handles, taillights, and headlight covers. An electric or air wrench/screwdriver makes the process much easier and faster.

60 KIT CAR



After clamping the new front hood to the original panel, scribe the front edge of the original section prior to cutting.



A grinding/cutting wheel is well worth the money to speed up the buildup process. After trimming off the excess, reclamp the new front hood.



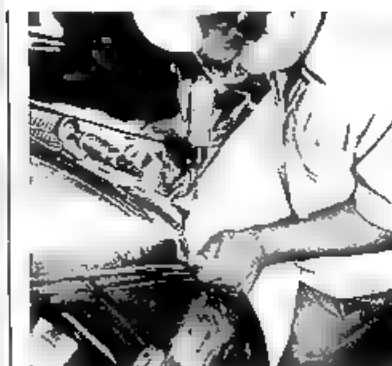
Smooth any burrs and/or grind off fiberglass strands before fitting the front clip.



With the hood clamped in place, slide on the front piece. It's light enough for one person to handle, but another pair of hands will be needed for the rear.

THINKING ABOUT PUTTING NEW PLASTIC ON AN OLD PONTIAC? HERE'S HOW TO DO IT USING THE PONARI KIT

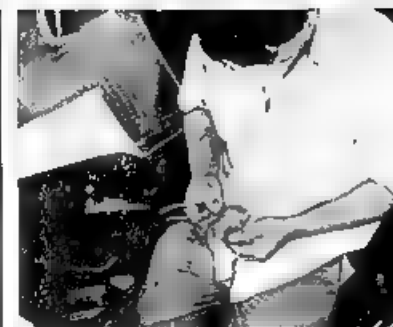
TEXT & PHOTOS BY JIM FENT



Fitting the fender against the windshield pillar may require beveling the fiberglass panel. Once this is done, locate the closest mounting pad underneath, mark the fiberglass, and drill a hole. Enlarge it slightly to allow for adjusting the panel position. Install one screw only, and then do the same thing on the opposite side of the windshield before inserting any other screws.



Once the front fenders line up properly, drill the rest of the holes and tighten down the screws along the sides of the compartment.



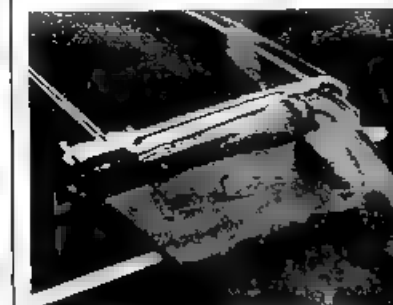
Before proceeding to the next panel, custom-cut the screens to fit into the side vents (these will have to be cut open by hand as well).



Use some Bondo or other fiberglass adhesive to install the screen, and let it dry while attaching the other panels.



The rear deck should be measured off its longitudinal centerline on both sides to determine the correct cutting lines. The plastic panel cuts easily, but its support ribs require a long saw blade.



Also cut back a section of the roof panel on either side to match the rear clip's sail-panel flanges.



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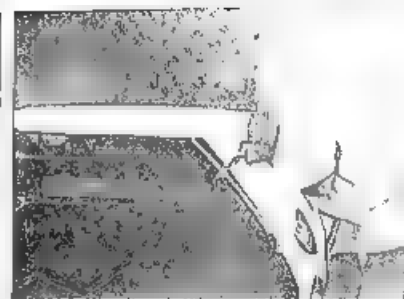
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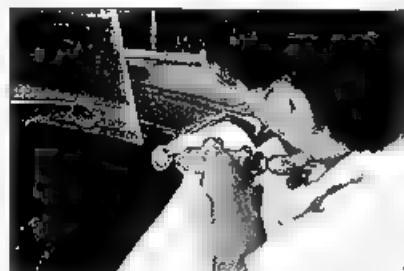
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The rear clip may need to be trimmed prior to fitting



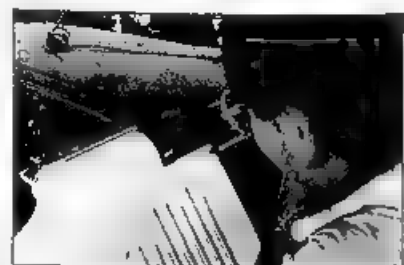
Ask a friend to help with the installation of the rear fender section.



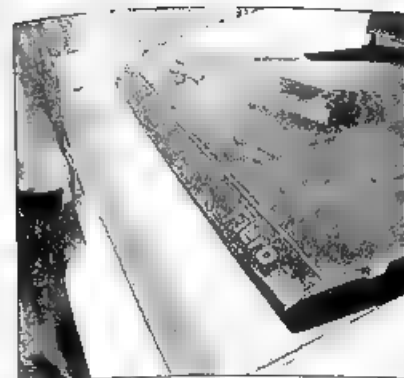
If the sail panel binds, cut it back slightly



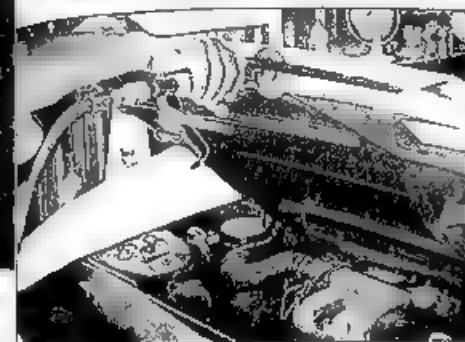
Don't worry about small gaps or overlaps. These can be filled in later



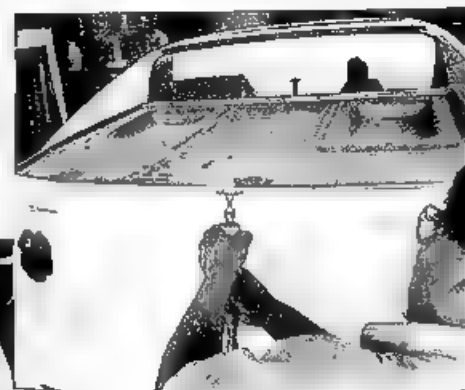
Line up the flange with the door jamb and then use one screw on each side to hold the rear clip in place.



Next, check the clearance for the rear hood and scribe a cut line



The plastic cuts easily, but sparks will fly when you slice through the backing plate for the lock.



The new panel has a little extra overlap that should be marked and then trimmed to fit.



Also cut out the rear vents.

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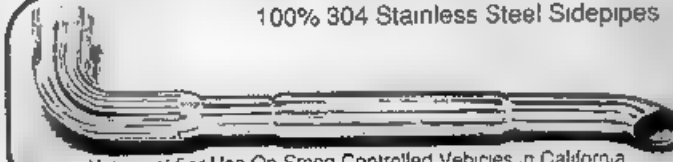
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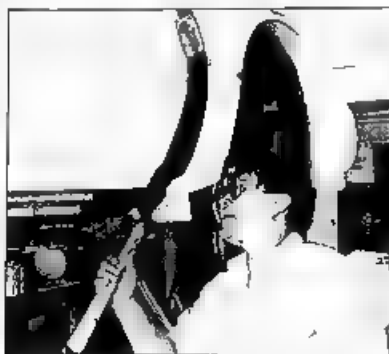
62 KIT CAR



The sides should be beveled to allow for clearance, especially at the ends of the transverse rib supports.



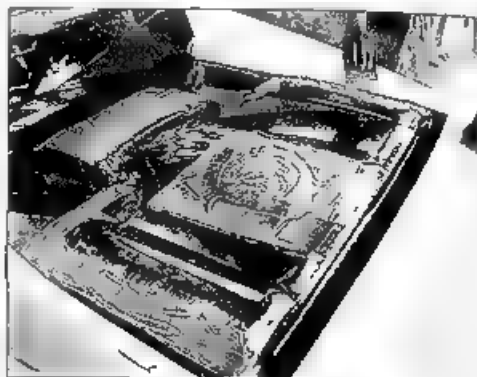
Once you are happy with the fit, add more screws to keep the skins in place.



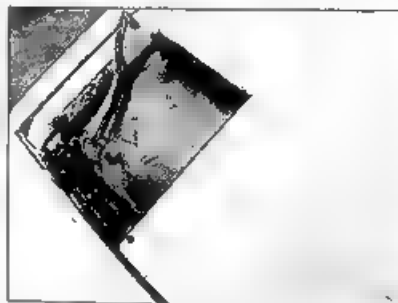
If the front fender still doesn't match the door, wedge it out with a block of wood and use some firm persuasion on the frame with a hammer and chisel.



Before applying the two-part epoxy adhesive, roughen both the surface of the original panel and the underside of the skin with a disc sander.



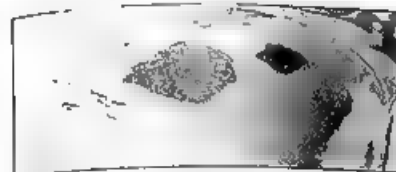
Don't skimp on the amount of epoxy used. The drips can always be ground off later.



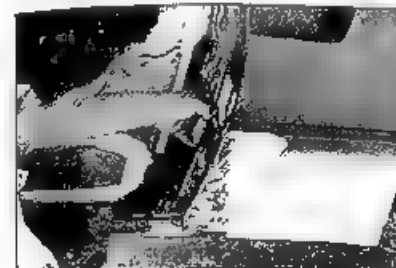
While the adhesive sets up, use clamps and screws to hold the panels in place. The front-fender clip and door skins don't require any adhesive for final attachments.



Two-part epoxy should be used to join the roof and sail panel and also to fill in the gap.



Allow the epoxy to dry overnight, and then grind and sand the roof joint smooth. Use Bondo (note dark patches) to fill in any remaining nicks or dips.



Fill in any remaining gaps with Bondo as well.



Attach the headlight flaps and check the alignment. Some body filler may be necessary to reduce gaps.



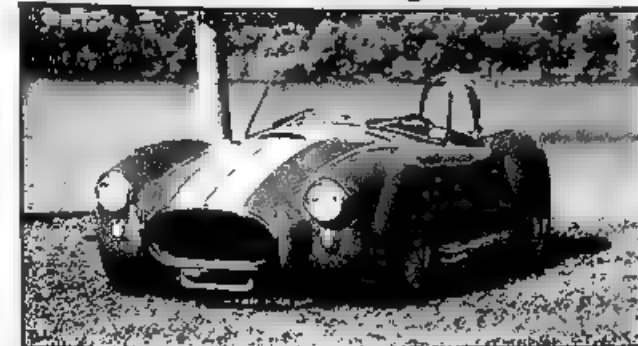
After the body is sanded smooth, apply primer.



The Ponari is now ready for your choice of paint. You may also want to lower the car a few inches and install new wheels and tires to match the new body's exotic lines.

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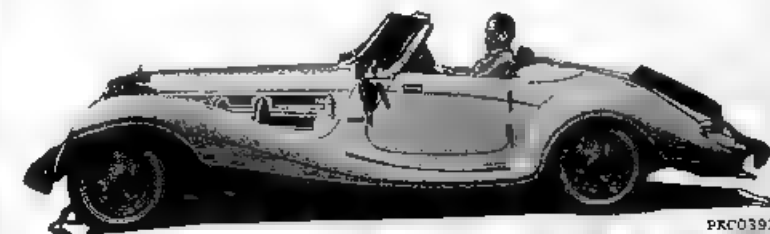
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PART II



ON THIS FIERO KIDS FIELD OF DREAMS, "IF YOU BUILD IT THEY WILL GO"

In our last episode on the Corson Spyder ("Heavy Hitter," September 91), we left you hanging. Randy Corson had just installed a fire-breathing 440hp Chevy small-block V8 into his reborn Fiero with mixed results. Thanks to an abundance of horsepower the car's acceleration showed remarkable improvement, but problems with the clutch gave up and constant temperature threatened to vaporize our valiant hero. We can't say that more R&D was in order before this dramatic engine swap passed our ratings board.

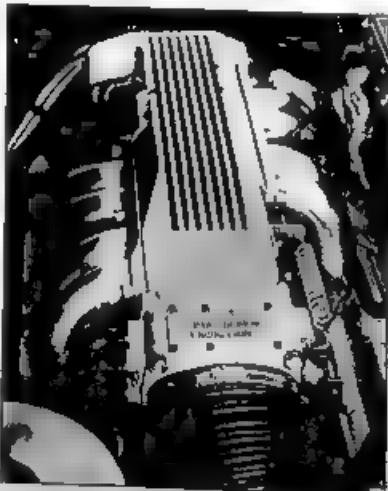
Well, there's a happy ending to this story, and a moral to go with it. Anyone planning to flog his or her Fiero into world-class shape can learn much from Corson's experience. And that's what good product development should do—go through all the hassles and headaches so you don't have to experience them yourself. Corson sweated bullets on this one, and the car has proved worthy of the effort. After terrorizing the desert highways around Phoenix, I can state without reservation that this fired-up Fiero kid is fantastic. Corson almost had to pry the keys out of my hand by the end of the day. Despite the balmy weather, the temp gauge didn't budge a millimeter from the normal operating range. And during all the stoplight starts, the clutch clamped down like the shark from *Jaws*.

Speaking of quick starts, even with a passenger and worn tires (Corson knows how to enjoy the car), the best 0-60 time was in the low fives. With fresh rubber and a solo pilot, Corson claims 4.0 seconds is no problem. I have no trouble believing him because there's a tremendous amount of torque on tap,

and the trick is getting the dang thing out of first as quickly as possible to minimize wheel spin. You could easily start in Second gear from a standstill, but I was reluctant to thrash Corson's personal driver, especially since he had already blown out Second on the original Isuzu tranny and had just installed a new Muncie Getrag unit. Anyway, the key to a slicker take-up was switching from a 1200 to a 2400-pound Center Force clutch.

As for the boil-over problem, the solutions were both simple and subtle. One of them is something all Fiero owners can learn from, if they don't know about it already. For some strange reason, the front-mounted overflow tank for the coolant system is not located at the highest point, so it's difficult to bleed out

Keeping this 440hp mill from blowing its stack required only a few simple fixes, once the cause of the trouble was located.



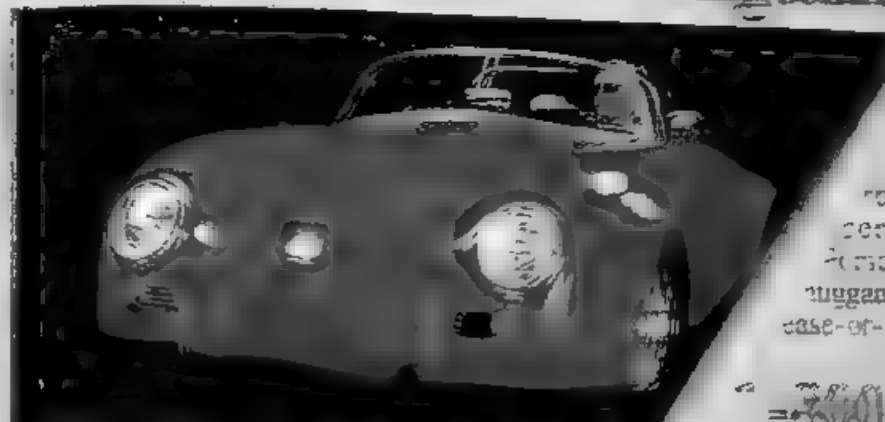
all the air. A stock engine may never suffer from this inherent malady, but after watching his super-Spyder bubble over one too many times, Corson jacked up the front end to purge air and found this adjustment markedly improved the cooling efficiency. If there's the slightest leak in the system, though—due to, say, a worn gasket on the cap—you'll have to go through this purging process with irritating frequency. A permanent fix is to relocate the overflow tank to the highest point in the engine compartment, not a difficult fix with even with a small-block V8 tucked in there. He also went to a thicker NASCAR radiator with 25 percent more volume, which requires some slight frame modifications to make it fit. Installing a fan in the rear proved useless, so he disconnected it.

Another, less-obvious step Corson recommends for anyone installing a hot-rodded engine with aluminum heads is to use thin-wall headers (Trans-Dapt Block Huggers in this case) instead of the stock cast-iron exhaust manifolds. He feels the latter retain heat longer and dissipate it to the heads, causing boil-over.

All of these measures are probably unnecessary with most garden-variety V8 engine swaps. When you go for the grand slam, however, extra preparation is invariably required. After all his efforts, we're happy to report that Corson belted this one right through the stadium lights.—Steve Temple

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FIERO CLUTCH REPAIR

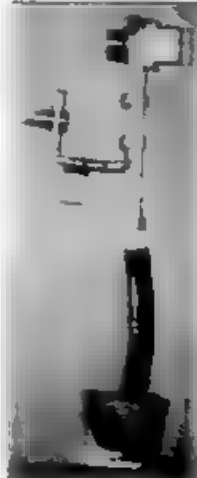
If you drive a manual transmission Fiero-based kit, you may already be aware that the clutch has some chronic problems. Fortunately V-8 Arnie says there is a \$19 cure for Fiero clutch problems, particularly '84-'86 models. Pontiac eventually realized the problem and issued a recall, but apparently not everyone got the word. The fix-it part is readily available from Pontiac parts suppliers.

For 100-percent clutch engagement, with all things being equal, the hydraulic piston needs 1.15 inches of travel. As the clutch wears, of course, that changes. In theory, as the clutch wears, the hydraulic pressures should maintain adequate engagement travel. However, some of the clutch pedals used during those years were subject to flexing and even bending so much that they would not allow enough travel for proper clutch operation.

To see if your clutch pedal is part of

the problem, use a magnet to determine if the top of the hydraulic pedal is steel or aluminum. The piece is aluminum if the magnet will not stick. The suspect pedals are constructed two pieces riveted together. One piece is steel, the other aluminum. Hard pressure on the pedal as the clutch wears apparently causes the aluminum piece to flex and even bend in some instances and thus have an adverse effect on the clutch engagement system. You determine that the pedal is aluminum head for the Pontiac dealer and buy part No. 10066423, an all-steel pedal assembly. You will also need to go to the store, snap and find a plastic cushion to the master cylinder shaft in the pedal assembly proper. Worst shifter replacement bushings should also be replaced.

V-8 Arnie suggests another trick aimed at increasing engagement performance. Bleeding the clutch system to purge it of air is different from the procedure to bleed the brake systems. There is no pump involved in the clutch method, even though unformed wrenches will try.



Bleeding the Fiero clutch system is a two-person operation in respects. While one person pushes the clutch pedal down, the other person opens the bleeder valve on the hydraulic cylinder head, making sure the bleeder valve is not at the very end of the hydraulic system and may retain some air. Close the valve, then push the clutch again. Repeat this procedure several times. Next, remove the bleeder valve while someone pushes in the ram and holds it there until you get the valve back on. Finally make sure that the ram is back in place. Now the system should be in better shape.

What were once thought to be third-hand and in some instances incurable clutch maladies thankfully can be solved without bankrupting the repair budget. If the magnet test shows that the clutch pedal was already compromised yet you still have problems with engagement, the search for a fix will doubtless take more time and effort. Arnie says that in about 90 percent of the cases, however, the pedal fix is all that's required.—Jim Youngs



The Polyfix System includes all the materials needed for the five simple steps.

Quick Fix

Most kit car owners and builders are familiar with both the advantages and disadvantages of fiberglass. Its light weight and workability are ideal for assembly, but repair work can be messy and difficult, involving resins that must be mixed and properly applied with cloth.

Burke Racing has introduced an easier method for many simple repairs. It's called the Polyfix Thermal Fusion Repair System, originally designed for use in the aviation industry. Its ability to handle high stress repair areas makes it a valuable tool for kit car owners as well.

Polyfix is remarkably quick in its appli-

cation, and it's ready to take paint after a mere 30 minutes. The three-part system allows you to fix damage completely in the time it would take to mix most standard fiberglass resins.

- Susan Enslin



Line up the broken piece with the panel. It is not necessary to remove it from the chassis.



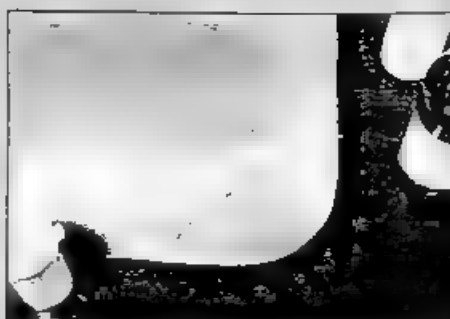
Once the area is clean, spray the accelerator on the repair area.



Lightly sand the repair area, leaving the strands of glass, but remove any dust or particles. Place masking tape on the back side of small holes.



Join the pieces together and apply a thin coat of Polyglue, a repair bond that is almost instantaneous. Next, sprinkle a thin layer of Polydust catalytic filler on the repair joint. Since it expands during the fusing process, only a small amount is necessary. Apply a second thin coat of Polyglue and wait for the smoke to clear.



The finished repair is ready for sanding in minutes.

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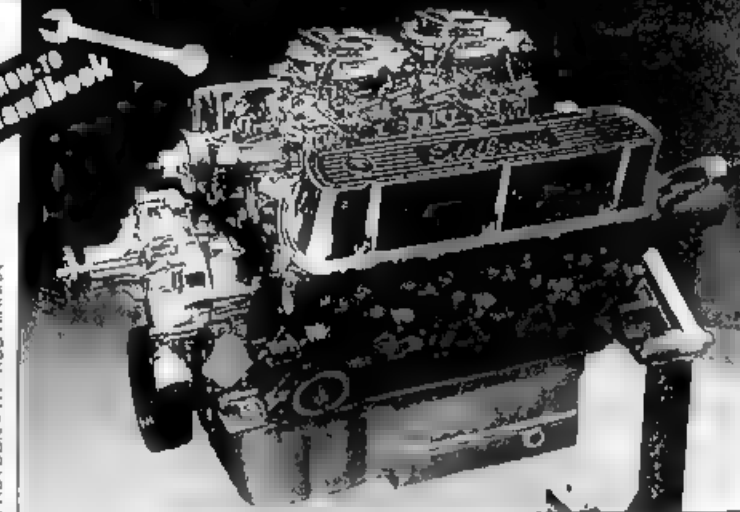


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MOTORS



Edelbrock's street-tough 302 looks as good as it performs, thanks to Elite Series valve covers and a polished intake, timing cover, and Ford SVO water pump. Other Edelbrock parts include the cam, lifters, valve springs, retainers, pushrods, timing chain, fuel pump, and carbs.

BUILDING A STREETABLE AND STRONG SMALL-BLOCK FORD

BY CHUCK LOMBARDO JR



Cobra enthusiasts need little introduction to the Ford 302, a hi-po version of the 289 small-block V8 Shelby wedged between the aluminum fenders of the AC Ace. Although the 427 is what made the Cobra famous, most Cobra replicas built today have the smaller V8. A great many other specialty cars benefit from this potent little package as well. They range in type from replicas of exotics and vintage vehicles to neoclassics and street rods. The latter is what gets Vic Edelbrock fired up. That name is synonymous with performance, and has been ever since Vic Sr. modified his first flathead motor. That kind of performance came in the form of maximum horsepower and top speed.

Vic Jr. is a chip off the old block. He loves all kinds of racing and big horsepower numbers. So he couldn't resist the urge to fit a street rod with an all-aluminum, 400-inch, rumpy-cammed, tuner-rammed, mega-horsepower Chevy. It's great for short, fast spurts down the boulevard, but when Vic tried to take it for a cruise around town, he soon learned that today's street rods demand a slightly different set of performance parameters. They must be able to idle all day, stay cool in slow traffic, and fill up on unleaded. It's also nice if they can get decent fuel mileage, maintain good vacuum for power

brakes, have plenty of low-end torque, and afford lots of trouble-free miles of reliable running.

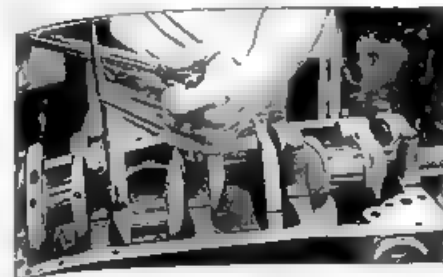
Vic has also learned that street rods are lots of fun, so when he sent the car up to Roy Brizio's shop in South San Francisco for rebuilding, he told them to make it look like a hot rod but have the creature comforts for cool cruising: independent front suspension, power everything, air conditioning, and a hi-fi sound system. As usual, he'd have his own engine shop work up the powertrain that would be centered on a 302 Ford small-block. That's right, F-O-R-D. While Vic has been a Bowtie fan for years, he decided this street rod should have a Ford in it; plus, he wanted people to know that Edelbrock makes performance parts for Fords as well as Chevrolets.

Curt Hooker, Edelbrock's engine room chief, assigned Robert Jung to massage this motor. He started with a "Mexican block" engine from a '70s Econoline van. These engines, made in Mexico from the old hi-po 289 patterns, feature visibly thicker main caps and webs. They were used in certain small-block-powered vans and trucks in the '70s. Initially, Hooker and Jung had planned to top this with a set of Dart II aftermar-



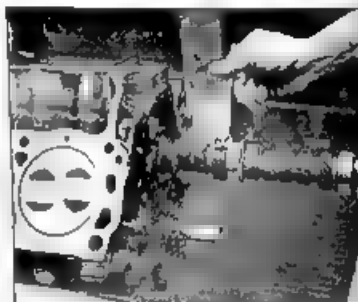
Besides the usual crank prep of polishing, balancing, and oil-hole chamfering, Edelbrock's Robert Jung also had the main journals cross drilled to provide 360-degree oiling to the rods.

The weak links in small-block Fords are the 7/16-inch rod bolts. Robert replaced them with high-strength ones from ARP. He also had the stock rods crack checked, polished on the beams, and shot-peened. The pistons are TRW Powerforged flattops that produce a hair under 9:1 compression (see text).



Robert used Childs & Albert babbit bearings clearanced at .0028-.003 mains and .0025 rods. Push the crank forward with a screwdriver to align both halves of the thrust bearing before torquing the caps.

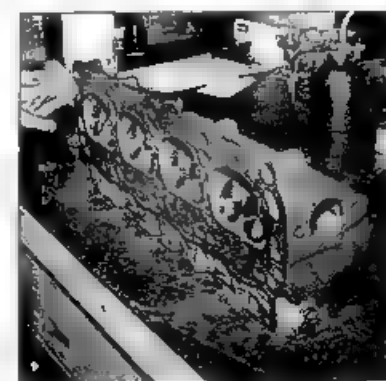
The mild Performer-Plus hydraulic cam is in the 270 1/280 E "advertised duration" range. It is driven by an Edelbrock double-row, true roller timing chain for more durability and less friction. It also ensures that the cam is installed "straight up." The timing marks on many stock Ford gears retard the cam.



ket cylinder heads, because a small block Ford needs better breathing. Since these heads have 66cc chambers, they selected TRW pistons (part No. L2488) for a 9:1 compression ratio. However, once the heads arrived, Hooker and Jung decided that the intake ports were too big for this small engine. They would make plenty of top-end horsepower, but would kill bottom-end torque. The game plan for this engine was to keep the torque curve as broad and as flat as possible. So they decided on a set of '69-'70 351 Windsor heads, which offer larger ports and valves (1.84 in/1.54 in E) than 302 heads, with 62cc chambers. These heads still require larger valves (1.900 in/1.600 in E) and some bowl and port cleanup and blending to make good power. Jung and Hooker were shooting for 300 horsepower (about one per cubic inch), which is plenty for most street rods. With the

larger Kaufmann stainless valves in place, the chambers measured 59 cc, so Jung cut .020 inch from the tops of the pistons to give 8.97:1 compression in this engine. To duplicate this combination, order TRW pistons part No. L2482 instead to give 8.9:1 compression with 60cc chambers.

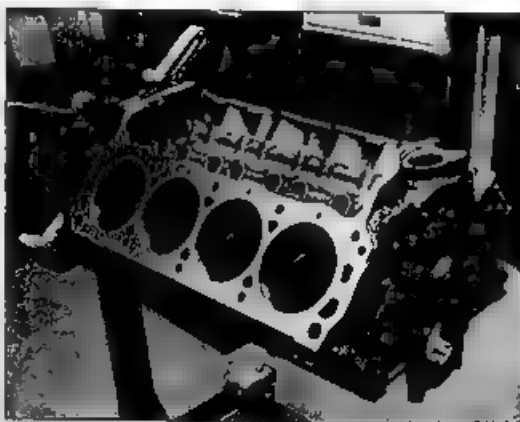
The camshaft obviously plays a big role in street performance. Too much cam makes your engine sound mean but kills low-end power, as well as manifold vacuum. For the little Ford, Jung selected Edelbrock's Performer-Plus hydraulic package (part No. 2122), that measures 204 1/214 E duration at .050, .448/.472 lift, with 112-degree lobe separation. Another major consideration is carburetion. While Jung admitted that a single four-barrel setup with longer runners might produce a bit more power, he and Hooker decided on Edelbrock's new dual four-barrel manifold (part No. 5435) and a pair of 500-cfm Edelbrock carburetors (part No. 1404) for two reasons: They look really impressive, and with progressive linkage (part No. 7094), they allow the engine to run on the primaries of one carbure-



A good, inexpensive head swap for 302s are '69-'70 351 Windsors (casting No. C90E or D90E) that offer larger valves and ports. They work best with even larger stainless 1.900 and 1.600 valves from Kaufmann Products.

STREET-TOUGH

302



The buildup started with a strong, Mexican-made block from a '70s van. It was bored .030, decked, and honed. Such blueprinting reduces friction and the chances of premature wear.

Fords need more bottom-end oiling. To direct more oil to the crank and rods, tap the main bearing oil passages in the main web and screw in .090 restrictor plugs, available from SVE Motorsports (part No. M-6799-A302).



Because the head bolts are few and small, 289-302 Fords tend to blow head gaskets under severe use. Edelbrock just revised its Blue Oval type (part No. 1011-1) for these engines, which are installed.

Jung blended the bowls, matched the ports to the gaskets, and gave the intake and exhaust ports a mild cleanup.



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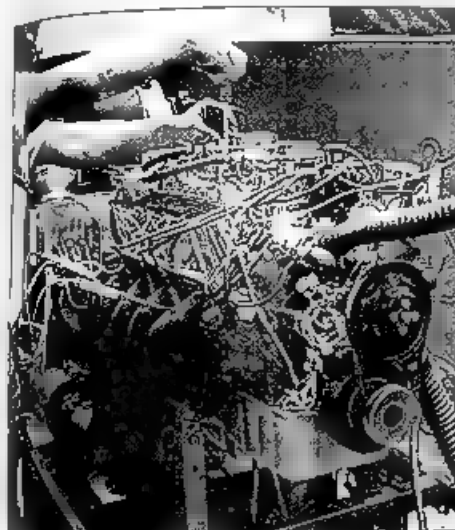
Since 351-W heads have 3/8-inch holes and 302s use 1/2-inch bolts, special large-head bolts (SVO kit M-6065-B289) are required for the swap. The pedestals were also milled and tapped for Crane 3/8-inch screw-in rocker studs and guide plates. The Edelbrock valve springs were installed with 80 pounds pressure at the seat, giving 230 pounds at full lift.

tor during normal driving thus delivering excellent fuel economy until you decide to mash the throttle and open all eight barrels.

As the dyno chart on the following page shows, Hooker and Jung came very close to their 300hp goal, reaching 291 hp at 5500 rpm. It also shows a very strong and broad torque curve, hovering around 300 lbs-ft from 2500 through 5500 rpm. For a 302-inch engine, these numbers are impressive, especially considering the power is in the usable street-driving range. Now look at the "Brake Specific" column on the next page that shows how much fuel was consumed to make this power. These figures are on the rich side. Racing engines usually show brake specifics in the .47-.50 range. Leaning this engine out could produce more power, but it would create much higher cylinder temperatures and increase chances of ping-pong or detonation. Running the engine a little "fat" is much easier on valves and pistons; it actually lowers coolant temperature and allows the use of lower-octane gasoline. What about fuel econ-

omy? Remember that dyno readings are taken at wide-open throttle. With the progressive linkage on the dual quads, this engine will be sipping gas from two small primaries most of the time.

The surprising part is that building this small Ford for durability, reliability and streetability didn't hurt its horsepower potential all that much. In a previous project, Edelbrock built a similar Ford 302 with extensively ported 351-W heads, higher compression, the bigger Torker-Plus cam, a Torker II single-plane intake, and a large Holley tuned for maximum power, and got 330 peak horsepower. Vic's street-tough 302 puts out nearly 90 percent as much power, but will be a whole lot more fun to drive—especially with the air on and the stereo turned up. **KC**



With the two 500-cfm Edelbrock carbs bolted on top, an MSD electronic distributor with a 6AL box, and 1 1/2x30-inch headers, the tough little Ford put out 291 hp and 314 lbs-ft of torque. Jung set the timing at 12 degrees initial, with 34 degrees total advance and he added a vacuum advance for highway mileage.

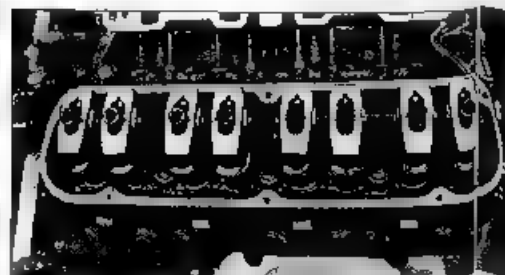
SOURCES

Avinid
Dept. KC
11631 Vanowen
North Hollywood, CA 91605
818/786-4025

Edelbrock
Dept. KC
2700 California St.
Torrance, CA 90509
310/781-2222

Ford Motorsport
Performance Equipment
Dept. KC
44020 N. Groesbeck Hwy
Mt. Clemens, MI 48083-116
313/337-1356

Kaufmann Products
Dept. KC
12400 Benedict Ave.
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Since aftermarket adjustable rockers are necessary anyway, Robert installed a set of Crane rollers to further reduce friction.

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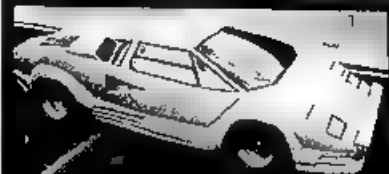
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THIRSTY SEBRING

I built a Sebring that I have been driving for three years. It has a very torquey Ford 302 engine and the matching C4 automatic transmission. The engine and transmission were professionally rebuilt before being put in the car. I used the original type two-barrel carb (also rebuilt).

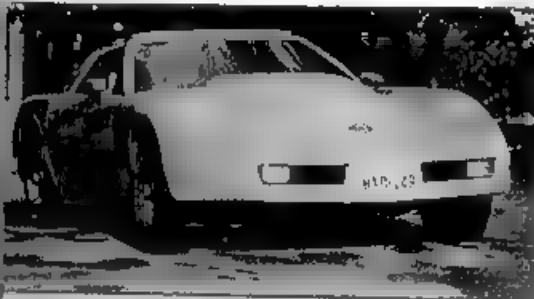
I really like the car, and I use it as a roadster, touring around town with only an occasional burst of lead foot. I would like to use it more frequently on the highway for short trips. The above setup provides only 13 to 14 mpg, which is not very good on a 2400-pound car. This mileage only gives me a range of 150 miles between gas stations. I need information on how to improve mpg and driveability, as well as cost factors.

Would changing the C4 transmission to a four- or five-speed auto be better? What year Fords would match the engine? What about changing the torque converter on the transmission? I have detected some wind-up shifting when the engine gets hot. Is this due to loose bands? Should I change the carb and intakes to a four-barrel setup? What cfm and brands would best suit the job? Note: The rear end is the same '76 3.0:1 ratio.

Doug English
Palm Beach Gardens, FL

Before you replace any major components, check the stall converter and see if the tranny is shifting out of low range. A four-barrel carb will increase your fuel consumption.

VECTERING VETCOR



I'm hoping that you will be able to supply me with some information. I have a '70 Pontiac LeMans two-door 350 that has a solid chassis and a rebuilt engine. Alas, the body and interior are beyond restoration.

I would like to rebody it with a kit. Do

74 KIT CAR

you know of a kit that will mount onto this Pontiac frame without any major alterations?

Tom Ogden
Bainbridge, NY

Vetcor Enterprises has an 85-page construction manual and video that explain how to install a late-model Corvette body on a standard GM chassis. If you'd like to see a completed car, Vetcor President Jack Watkins' personal car is a rebodied LeMans of the same year as your donor car. The estimated cost of the rebody is \$5000. Information: Vetcor Enterprises, Inc., Dept. KC, 5125 Gander Rd. West, Dayton, OH 45424, 513/236-0830.

DECODING THE SHIELD

I am looking for a Puma GTE Coupe windshield. The existing windshield, built in 1978, was manufactured by Vitroplex S.A. I have tried a few kit car companies, as well as some windshield sales companies, all with no success. Can you recommend a source? Do you know of a U.S. importer that represents Vitroplex?

John Whelan
Palo Alto, CA

Contact Chuck Beck at Beck Development (Dept. KC, 1531 W. 13th St., Unit E, Upland, CA 91786, 714/981-3840) for a replacement windshield.

DISCOVERING THE OPEL

Do you know of anyone making fiberglass or reproduction bodies and frames for the Opel GT? I plan to make a custom convertible using the Opel's basic shape and wheel base. If there is a frame and body already in production, it would save me from using an original as a donor.

Rob Kelly
Wakefield, VA

Sorry, we don't know of any companies making bodies or frames for the Opel GT. Readers?

STREET-FIGHTING TOWN

Here in Detroit, every day is a constant battle to produce the top street machine. I plan on entering this battle in

1992 with my own project, the Bradley GT Stealth (a souped-up '75 Bradley GT). The only problems that I don't know anything about are kit cars or engine swaps.

What types of engines will fit? What components do I need to make the swap from a VW-type 3 to a V6 or V8? Do I need to reinforce the frame? Where can I get a digital gauge kit for my dashboard?

Theron Rawls
Detroit, MI

See the following letter from KEP for an answer to your questions. For the digital kit, contact Johnny's Rod Shop (Dept. KC, Rt. 2, Box 411A, Hwy. 150, Maiden, NC 28650, 704/483-3300).

GEARED UP

In response to your reply in Kit Tech (September '91), a 2.8-liter Chevy V6 is very compatible with either a stock VW or 914 transaxle for highway cruising. It would not need to be regeared for a 3.8 Chevy V6 unless the aim is a comfortable, high-mileage cruiser. For a strong, tall-geared transaxle, the Aase J4 could be used at much less expense than the one you recommend. We do not recommend the Corvair unit with a V8.

Hobert Kennedy
Kennedy Engineered Products
Dept. KC
38830 17th St. East
Palmdale, CA 93550
805/272-1147

PERFORMANCE ANXIETY

I own an '84 Toyota Celica GT five-speed, and I want to improve its handling and overall performance. I've searched for companies that carry stock performance parts and kits for Celicas, but I've only found one—Jim Cook Racing (JCR). Would you give me some more addresses where I might inquire about performance parts for my engine, suspension, steering, exhaust system, transmission, and also ground-effects or aero styling kits?

Kevin Beaver
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Try St. Andres (Dept. KC, 12812 Valley View St., #17, Garden Grove, CA 92645, 800/441-1123). Also, see "Radical Restylin" on p. 56. KC

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When you on light the Miller-Woods MX Turbo remains eerily calm. Its V6 hums as smoothly as it scuttles. The car cruises down the boulevard. Of course, that's because the T04 B Garrett Turbocharger hasn't ignited the Buick Grand National 3.4-liter V6 yet. The fuse is still burning to the dynamite until, about 2400 rpm. Then suddenly, in the words of NASA's Mission Control, "We have liftoff!"

That's when the fun begins. From the cockpit, the launch feels like a mega-force slamming against the rear bumper, pressing the driver harder and harder into the back of the plush leather bucket seat and threatening to catapult our MX missile into orbit. How could all this

MILLER-WOODS SEBRING MX TURBO

TEXT & PHOTOS
JERRY HEASLEY

MODERN MUSCLE WRAPPED IN CLASSIC CLOTHING

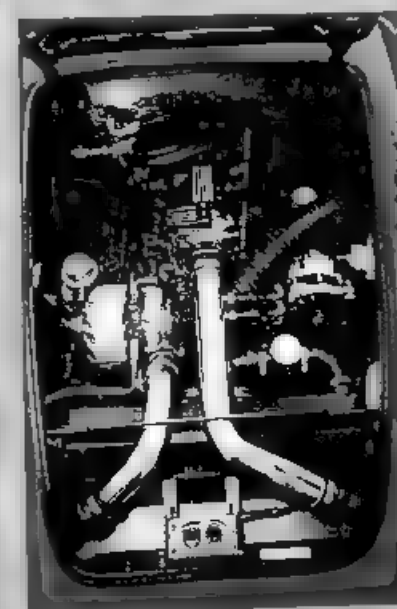


power comes from such a small engine that felt so tame. The stop on

As the turbo shoves air down the Buick Grand National V6, the tach goes wild to 5600 rpm, and the heavily modified GM 200 R4 automatic bazookas Second gear, breaking loose the street tires, only to repeat the process once again in Third gear. Fourth gear overdrive is not necessary, and we let off the accelerator pedal, exhilarated by a 12.90 at 115 mph pass!

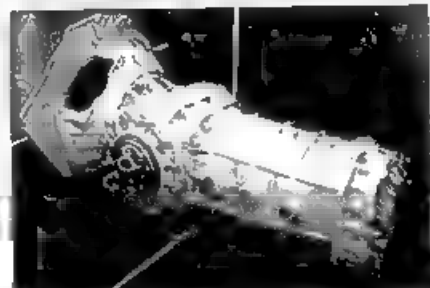
Further examination of the e.t.s on our Vericom computer shows that 0-60 mph arrived in a mere 4.8 seconds, but these times could be bettered by using the installed Hurst Line-Loc to brake the MX until turbo boost kicks in for maximum launch.

Of course, launching is where the a.t. numbers are lost. So, track-troopers that we are, we vowed to brake the car until the rear tires burn, burn, burn, and the turbo boost turns, turns, turns our tame V6 into a raving maniac. With the Hurst Line-Loc engaged, we used the B&M Quick Shift to dump the tranny in First with the



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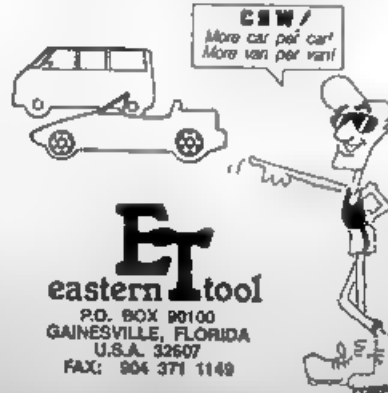
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throttle past 2400 rpm. When the turbo surges like a bucking bronco, we must release the button on the shift handle or brake dance our way down the 1320. But with so much torque to the rear wheels, the tires go up in smoke. The launch was slightly better than with no boost and the 0- to 60-mph time dropped to 4.6 seconds. Quarter-mile e.t.'s were incredible—12.80 at 119 mph!

The irony of this straight-line test is that this Sebring MX Turbo was not built for all-out drag racing or maximum 0- to 60-mph times. That's why the torque converter has a docile 2400 rpm stall speed, the rear gears are tall 3.27s, and the tires are street radials.

There is even more irony in that Miller-Woods' Sebring MX Turbo, with its four-link rear suspension and B&M Quick Shift, also was not built for fancy cornering. So, what is it? It's mostly a straight-line, stylish boogie board that has been heavily massaged by the turbo experts at Miller-Woods, but with no significant compromises to streetability. It has the natty attire of an Austin-Healy, but it's a Sebring MX kit from Classic Roadsters.

Although Miller-Woods builds this special high-performance version of the Sebring MX, the customer sets the parameters when ordering the car. In this case, the buyer begged to boulevard his turbo around town because he liked the classic looks, but as a Buick owner and drag racing fan, he also wanted to be able to deceive and outrun just about any game on the street today.

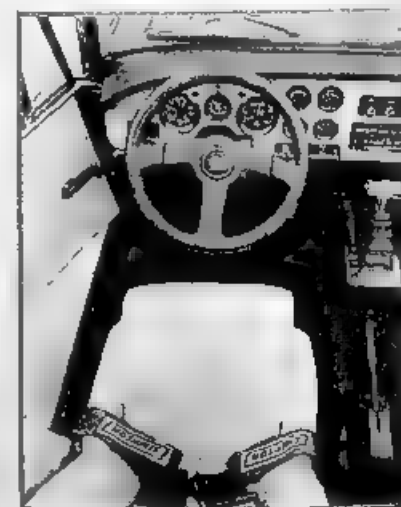
Nick Mirabile is the owner's name and flying is his game, whether at high altitude or at ground level. He's



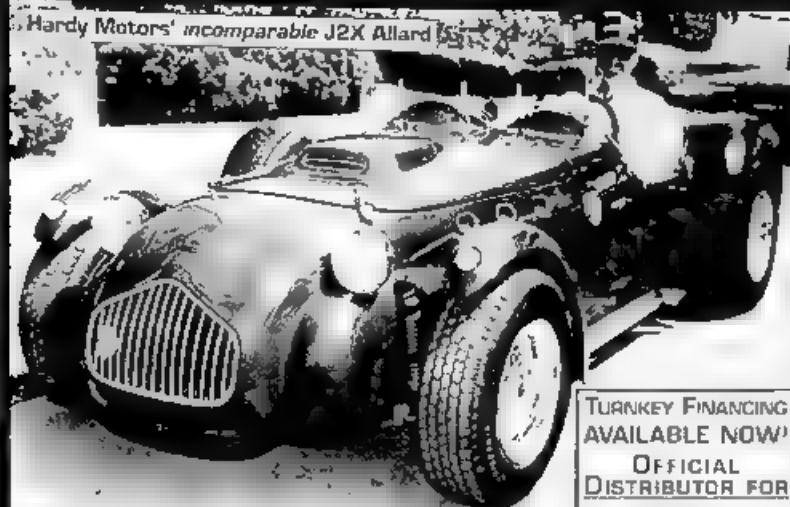
The Miller-Woods MX Turbo won't jerk your neck when the light turns green. But once the turbo kicks in, it'll accelerate right out from under you.

A Dallas-based commercial pilot who owns an '86 Buick Grand National coupe. Pleased with its straight-line performance, he was even more elated when the Miller-Woods crew of Oklahoma City upped the car's boost from a stock 12 psi to a street-radical 21 psi. This procedure required a remote wastegate and a Miller-Woods TurboGroup Fueler—invented and built by Miller-Woods and sourced on the Callaway Twin Turbo, as well as on the Callaway prepared Alfa Romeo GTV 6.

Mirabile began dreaming one day, and wondered what performance



The rosewood dash and leather-covered bucket seats smell and look like a vintage sports car should, but the B&M Quick Shift and Grant G.T. steering wheel give away the Pro Street character of this kit car.



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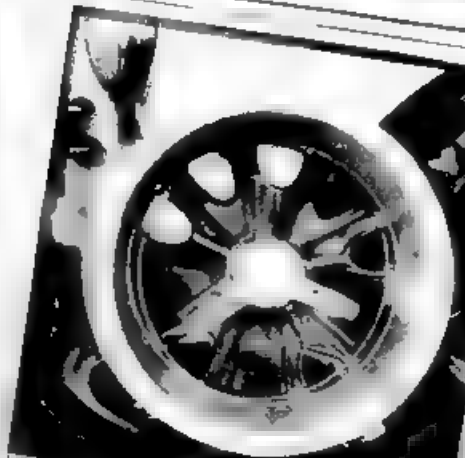
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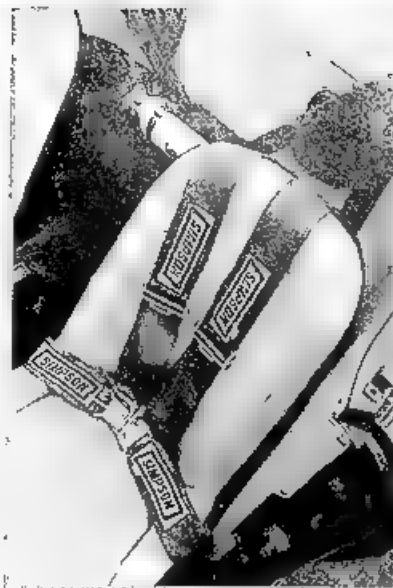


could be wrought if this high-pressure version of the Grand National engine were installed in a lightweight sports car. But which sports car? During REM sleep mode, Mirabile saw classy English styling. He envisioned dropping 1000 pounds from his Buick and 20 pounds from his waistline. He fantasized about leather bucket seats and a real wood dash. Under his happy torso, strapped into the seat with a Simpson five-point harness, would be enough chassis to handle a dream 450 horsepower. He wanted big wheels and tires. Well, in short, he wanted it all.

Classic Roadsters, Ltd (Dept. KC, 1617 Main Ave., Fargo, ND 58103-1595, 800/767-2277) had the answer, and it wasn't a fantasy. The 2500 pound Sebring 5000 can be ordered turn-key with a Ford 302 engine, or optional with the Chevrolet 305, 327, 350, or 400. However, The Ultimate Street Performer is the Sebring MX, featuring a wider, more muscular body with the poten-

tial for even better performance. The 302-powered Sebring 5000's six-second 0- to 60-mph times and low 14-second quarter-mile e.t.'s were impressive, but Mirabile's 3700-pound Grand National was even quicker with a smaller, but turbocharged, 3.8-liter V6 engine.

Mirabile could see himself in a Classic Roadster, pumped up with a Grand National V6. The engine offers more power than a 302 Ford or a 350 Chevy, with the added advantage of a smaller powerplant that easily fits into the engine bay of a Sebring MX. He got together with Miller-Woods and from this meeting was born the Miller Woods Sebring MX Turbo. Charles Kuehn, who owns Miller-Woods, liked the combination so much that he was willing to series-produce the car although an order must be received before any Sebring MX Turbos are built. He and his staff have engineered the MX to be the ultimate turbocharged kit car in classic clothing. Builders can either order a com-



Bolt yourself into the Simpson five-point harness for a rocket ship ride. The bucket seats are surrounded by plush carpet.

plete car from Miller-Woods or buy the engineered components to make their own MX Turbo.

This first build then became a prototype work. In the process, the crew at M-W discovered it would need to fabricate motor mounts and an exhaust system. They used the GM C81 emissions and computer system, so its wiring harness and ECM had to be incorporated into the car—not an easy job.

The Grand National V6 could have remained stock, and it fits the Classic Roadster engine bay like it was made for the chassis, but owner preference in this instance dreamed of more horsepower—425 to 450 in all. In a 2540-pound application, the power-to-weight figures out to an astounding 6:1 ratio!

The 3.8 V6 is timed by a higher lift cam sourced from the 4.3-liter engine, and with this bigger breath goes a larger turbocharger from Turbonetics of Moorpark, California. The heads are ported and polished, and the engine is blueprinted and balanced. Miller-Woods engineered and fabricated a larger intercooler than stock, and a cross-flow, five-row radiator with larger end tanks.

The increased airflow outstrips the capability of the stock 3.8-liter fuel injectors, which is where the Miller-Woods TurboGroup Fueler enters the picture. Two injectors (usually only one is used) are mounted before the throttle and

after the intercooler. Computer circuitry inside the TurboGroup Fueler monitors engine rpm and boost pressure to figure the needed extra fuel, to allow the already beefed 3.8-liter a mammoth 21 pounds of boost, without running over-lean. The result is a realized (not dreamed) 425 to 450 horsepower that is delivered to a narrowed 8.8-inch Ford Traction Lok

Miller-Woods Sebring MX Turbo '91

SERIES Miller-Woods Sebring MX Turbo
PRICE (as tested) \$49,000
OWNER Nick Mirabile

DIMENSIONS

LENGTH 155.6"
WIDTH rear body 71.5"
HEIGHT 52.0"
WHEELBASE 94.5"
TRACK

Front 57.0"
Rear 58.5"

CURB WEIGHT 2540 lbs
FUEL TANK 13 gal

SUSPENSION

FRONT Independent w/coil springs, upper and lower control arms, double acting hydraulic shock absorbers
REAR Solid axle w/coil springs and Airston Engineering four link

STEERING

FRONT Rack & pinion 4.2 turns lock to lock, 37.5 foot turning circle

WHEELS

FRONT American Racing 15x7
REAR American Racing 15x10

TIRES

FRONT P215/60R-15
REAR P295/50R-15

BRAKES

FRONT 9.0x2.0-inch ventilated disc
REAR 9.0x2.0-inch cast-iron drum

WHEELS

FRONT American Racing 15x1
REAR American Racing 15x10

ENGINE

TYPE Grand National Turbo V6
SIZE 3.8 liter
INDUCTION Port fuel injection
C.R. 8.3:1
CAM

Intake 252" w/ 445" lift
Exhaust 244" w/ 429" lift

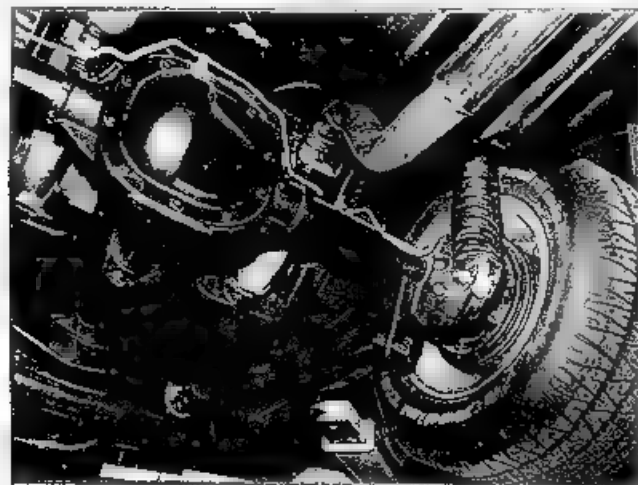
TURBOCHARGER Turbonetics T04-B
HORSEPOWER (est.) 425-450

TRANSMISSION GM 200 R4
overdrive w/extensive
modifications

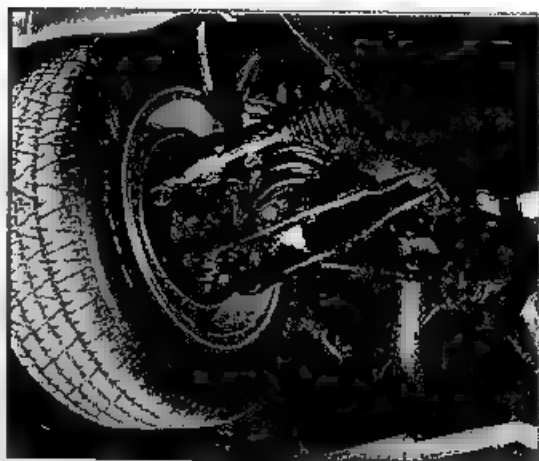
SHIFTER B&M Quick Shifter
AXLE Narrowed 8.2-inch
Ford Traction-Lok, 3.27:1

PERFORMANCE*
0-60 mph 4.6 seconds
1/4-mile 12.8 at 119 mph

*with Vericom computer, Hurst Line-50C utilized



Pro Street? The rear suspension is specific to the Miller-Woods MX Turbo, featuring an Airston four-link Street/Strip setup with coil springs clamping down a narrowed Ford 8.8 Traction-Lok rear axle.



The independent front suspension is conventional with coils between unequal-length control arms, shared by '74 Mustang IIs.



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rear axle via a heavily modified
General Motors four-speed overdrive
automatic

When we arrived in Oklahoma
City, Miller-Woods was still working
out bugs, starting with an unex-
pected PROM malfunction that
caused an over-rich condition and
black smoke on hard acceleration
Bob Youngfelt, who had hand
assembled this MX Turbo, also dis-
covered that the turbine housing
was too large for good street driving
Initially, turbo boost was hitting
hard at 3400 rpm, too late with the
very tall gearing. The car was a
rocketship from 40 to 100 mph, but
0- to 60-mph times were weak at 6.0
seconds, and the quarter-mile e.t.'s
were 14.5 at 111 mph, proving that
the car was making its power on the
top end

Another major concern was get-
ting the gobs of torque and power to
the ground, which explains the
Alston Engineering four-link in the
back. This setup is great for street
and strip, but it certainly was not
engineered for cornering. On smooth
roads, in straight lines, it does its
job well, clamping down the live
rear axle, but a pothole becomes a
teeth-jarring crash, and there is so
much power it's easy to get rubber
in the first three gears with street
tires

Also, the four-link proved touchy
It had to be adjusted right down to
the weight of the driver to get the
car to launch for best 0-60 mph and
quarter-mile e.t.'s. Otherwise, the
rear end feels like it's on ice during
hard acceleration from a standstill.

Mirabile is so intrigued with his
MX Turbo that he wants to get
together with the guys at Miller-
Woods and install a high-speed
torque converter, bolt on a set of
slicks, and go to the dragstrip to
challenge bigger game. In street
trim, there's hardly a legal car on
the road that can better this tame-
looking little roadster—which in
true sleeper form sounds docile in
street traffic. It'll make some believ-
ers at the dragstrip. **KC**

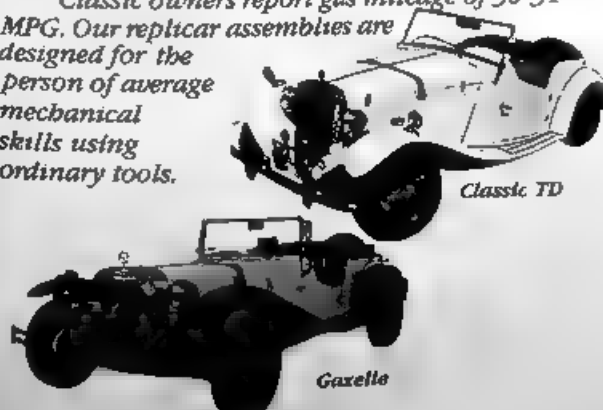
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SHOW-OFF

I have been an avid reader of *Kit Car* for the past six years, and on Memorial Day 1988, I began building my Cobra. Three years later to the day, I finished it. It's an Everett-Morrison 427SC-style Cobra, with a Mustang II front end and a Ford 8-inch rear axle. Power comes from a rebuilt '70 Chevy small-block 350 backed by a Muncie M22 four-speed transmission. By June 21, I had wound my way through the New York State DMV requirements for kit cars, and I had my plates. For the car's maiden voyage, my younger daughter and I got pizza "to go" from the farthest pizzeria we could find.

After months of driving, I'm still amazed by the attention the Cobra gets from passersby. It's very common for trucks and motorcycles to give the "thumbs up" sign, and when I park at work, it's not uncommon for passing motorists to go out of their way to drive into our parking lot for a closer look.

I'm very pleased with the customer service and technical



help I received from Bruce and Brett Everett during the construction of my Cobra. They always found the time to answer my questions over the phone concerning various technical details of construction.

Andy Hoeffler
Warwick, NY



DRIVING DOWN UNDER

At 21, I am the president of the Australian Component Car Club (A.C.C.C.), and I live in Sydney. The picture I have sent in is of my Eureka F/4 (known as a Sterling in America) that I have owned

for the past two years. The vehicle was factory-built in 1983, and I have modified it to my own tastes.

The color is gunmetal gray with contrasting gold pinstriping and wheels. At the moment, the car is running a '70 VW Type III, 1600 dual-port, twin-carb

engine. It is based on a '68 floorpan with independent rear suspension and a 75 Superbug disc front. The front suspension has been lowered 2 1/2 inches with an antisway bar, and the back has been dropped two inches. The drive gear includes a heavy-duty clutch, a four-speed QuickShift and gearbox, and flywheel support brackets.

The interior sports a woodgrain dash with VDO instrumentation and comforts such as air conditioning and electric heating. For listening pleasure there is a Sonic tape deck and graphic equalizer. This car is constantly out and about, since I drive it to work and back daily.

J.J. de Medic
Lane Cove, Sydney, Australia

going to trash the new Cobra on the very first test drive! That didn't happen, and I am having a blast giving rides to passengers who have never experienced the brute power of a big-block in a 2400-pound car.

Bill McCall
Middletown, OH

WHITE-KNUCKLE RIDE

I am sentimentally attached to my '90 Unique Cobra Replica because under the fiberglass hood rests the 427 engine from the last dirt track late model that I drove.

This particular '69 Chevrolet 427 four-bolt block with its matching aluminum heads sat patiently waiting in my barn since 1978 when it last saw racing action on Lawrenceburg, Indiana's quarter-mile dirt. The engine was completely rebuilt with a new steel crank, Crower rods, Aries .050-over pistons, a Lunati roller cam, and Crane rockers. My friend Brent Soale of B&B Automotive in Middletown, Ohio, did the engine work and dyno testing. Rewarding B&B's skills and my checkbook is 530 hp at 6400 rpm.

Coupling the big-block to the Doug Nash five-speed is a shifter aluminum flywheel and an 11-inch LUK clutch.

The week after Christmas 1990, when my son, Ryan, and I had just finished the powertrain in the Cobra, I had an exciting test drive. My right foot became caught under the brake pedal at about half throttle on semihwy roads.

I don't know how, but I untangled my foot and idled home. Then I had to cut the brake pedal down and heat and move the gas pedal to ensure no more white-knuckle rides. I really thought I was



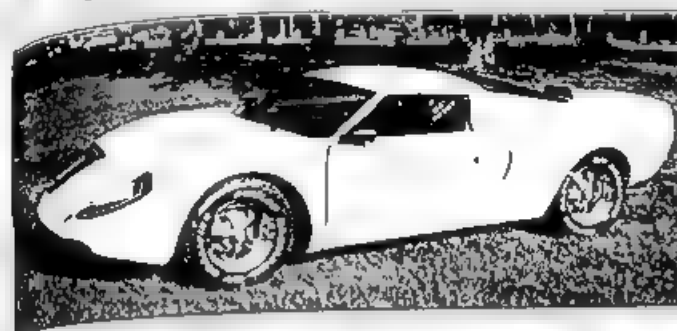
MORE AVENGER ADVENTURES

This is one of the earlier '70s models of the Fiberfab Avenger GT40. These cars often had a three-part body with

both the back and front opening up. They were usually built on VW frames and powered by a VW or Corvair engine. However, mine has a one-piece body powered by a Corvair Spyder engine. As long as you take your

time and build it well, these are great cars. Everyone stops me to ask if it is a Ferrari or Lamborghini—you can see why!

Bob McIntyre
Brook Park, OH



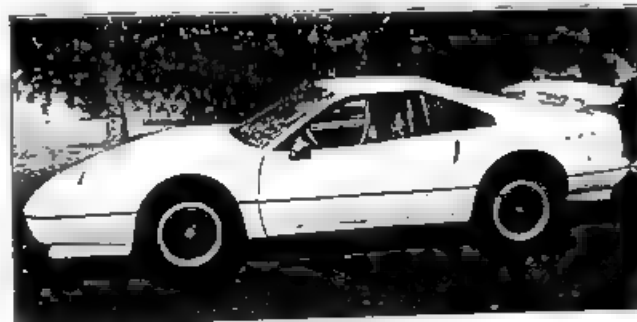
REBODY RAPTURE

Some time ago, I saw a rebodied kit for the Pontiac Fiero from Fejer Automobile in Canada. I bought an '86

Fiero, reworked the engine, and ordered the kit. About two months later (using my spare time only), the old body was off and the new one was on. The car was painted Ferrari yellow by a good friend in his bodyshop. I ordered the interior kit also offered by Fejer, and it is beautiful. The only thing missing is a Turbo. The car certainly

attracts plenty of attention wherever it goes. If there are any kit car clubs in my area or anyone interested in starting one, please contact me at 410/257-2049.

Bob Eveland
Dunkirk, MD



Working weekends for 2 1/2 years, then adding some weekdays for another year and a half, I managed to transform a '70 VW Beetle and the Fiberfab '29 Mercedes Gazelle kit into a finished product. It was from the ground up on the VW pan, replacing bearings, brakes, and shocks, lowering the front end, chroming the backing plates and torsion bars, and completely repainting and undercoating. The transaxle checked out OK, and with new CVC joints and chromed axle shafts, I finished out the drivetrain. I sold the engine because I had purchased a VW engine with an installed Claude's Buggies kit (92x82mm, 2180cc), a W100 cam, and Deano D ported heads. I added a pair of dual Weber carbs (44 IDF) to complete the power package. It does move out respectfully with the Monza-type dual exhaust, indicating the tonal

response. It passed the Arizona emissions test (for reconstructs) with flying colors. Lots of chrome, all chrome wetting, engine air venting, and sun visors helped customize the car. Wire wheels are 14x6 basket-type spoke chromed rims from Custom Wheel Industries in Santee, California, with 185 Pirelli P3 tires. This was a first for me in car building, as I was an accountant when I started, but I retired in 1987. I was almost 64 before the car was finished. I enjoyed building this car so much that I have a Jaguar SS-



STEALTH KIT

I would like to show you some pictures of my special car. It is built on a Mustang frame, but reskinned as a '79 Ford Fairmont. This is what Ford performance is all about.

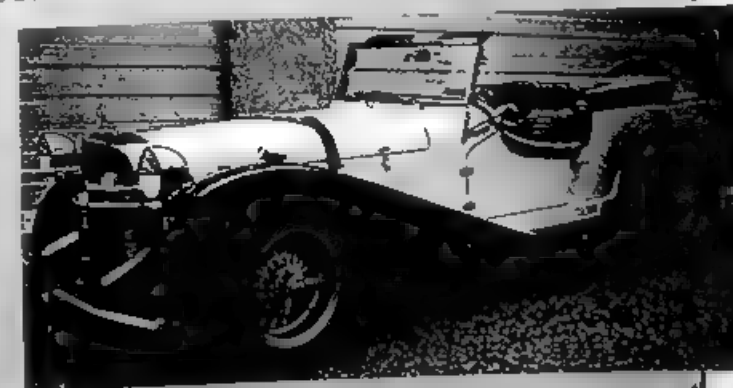
So as not to raise the suspicion of the local law enforcement, I have added several touches to make my car more stealthy. I have made this car look like any other ordinary vehicle driven in my neighborhood. This includes knocking out one headlight, bending the front license plate holder, and the custom rust job over the driver's rear quarter panel.

It has a 3.3-liter straight-six, mated to a three-speed automatic. Three of the tires are Pirellis, and the other one is a BFGoodrich. Needless to say, this car will never be pulled over for being the speed demon that it truly is!

Jason B. Harper
Hamilton, OH

100 kit and a Jaguar XK-120 kit to work on when I'm done with the '71 TR6 that I am presently building. I truly gave myself an interesting retirement hobby.

Les Heinz
Tucson, AZ



OFF THE SHELF



TORCH IT

Rothenberger announces the Solid Ox Welding Torch Outfit for welding, brazing, soldering, and metal cutting. The unit weighs nine pounds and comes complete with oxygen, propane, five tips, braze rods, a spark lighter, and illustrated instructions. It is designed not only for professional use, but also for homebuilt project cars. Information: Rothenberger USA, Dept. KC, 955 Monterey Pass Rd., Monterey Park, CA 91754, 213/268-1381

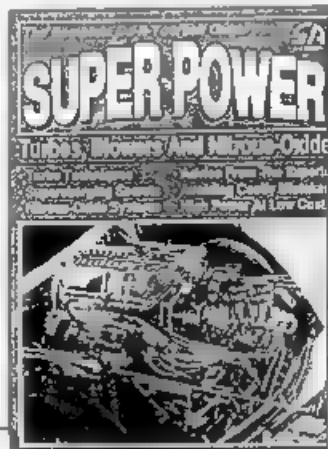


MUSTANG MODS

Do you own a Ford Mustang? Are you in the market for a restyling package that keeps you from looking like the rest? Prepare for Aeroform's new fiberglass GFX wide-body kit. It includes overlays for the front, rear, sides, and mirrors, along with a rear spoiler. There are three different applications available for '79-'92 models. Information: Aeroform, 6300 St. John Ave., Dept. KC, Kansas City, MO 64123, 800/345-2976 or 816/241-9711 (in Missouri).

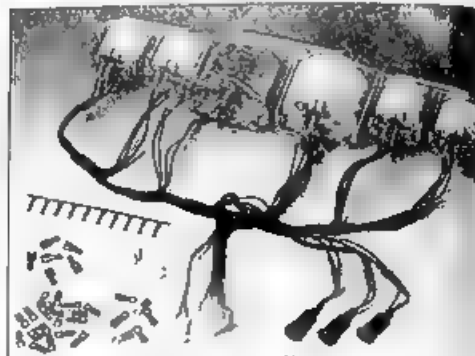
HIGHER POWER

Super Power is a do-it-yourself book crammed with info on building and using turbochargers, superchargers, and nitrous injection. It's recently been updated to expand its explanations and tips on building reliable horsepower and saving money. The book is a valuable addition to any specialty car builder's reference collection. Information: SA Design Books, Dept. KC, 515 W. Lambert, Bldg. E, Brea, CA 92621-3991, 714/529-8239 or 714/529-7999



SPOUTING OFF

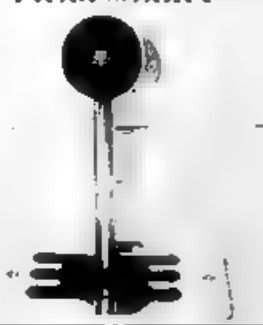
Nautical Technologies has developed a two-in-one spout and funnel to make adding oil and transmission fluid to a specialty car clean and easy. The unit arrives in two pieces and fits plastic oil bottles. When assembled, its extra length of spout makes pouring easier. Since the service areas of specialty car engines are sometimes difficult to reach or have small openings, this product transforms a sometimes messy project into a quick way to keep up with engine maintenance. The cost is \$1.99 plus 50 cents postage. Information: Nautical Technologies, Dept. KC, 525 W. Genesee, Saginaw, MI 48602, 517/573-3399



DASHING DASH

Perfect Performance Products introduces painless wiring with its Universal Dash Kit. The wiring assembly is compatible with all aftermarket gauges, and the kit comes with plenty of wire for wide dash installations and extra terminals. The instructions are easy and allow for simple installation and later removal. Avoid all those under-dash cramps and pain with this convenient system. Information: Perfect Performance Products, Inc., Dept. KC, 8851 W. Freeway, Suite 114, Fort Worth, TX 76116, 800/423-9696

FiEuro/Shift



SHIFTING WITH STYLE

The shifter is one of the most vital finishing touches you can upgrade in your vehicle's interior and it should reflect the care you've put into your car. Performance Products has created the FiEuro/Shift, specially designed for use without modification in various Euro-styled Fiero rebodies. Whether the shifter is four or five speeds, the installation is easy, and the step-by-step instructions should guide you through the entire operation in about 10 to 15 minutes. Information: Performance Products, Inc., 6 Jeanette Dr., Dept. KC, Plainville, CT 06062, 203/793-0447

SUIT UP

The Moonsuit from Sierra Pacific Safety Supply is a tough, puncture-proof pair of coveralls. Made of Du Pont Tyvek, this suit is a durable way to manage your dirtiest tasks. When compressed, it's small enough to fit into a glove compartment or tool box. Originally designed for use in the clean rooms of computer companies, the suit was designed to repel all types of grease and grime. Comfortable and lightweight, the Moonsuit comes in white only, and in packages of two. Information: Sierra Pacific Safety Supply Company, Dept. KC, 19925 Steven Creek Blvd., #126, Cupertino, CA 95014, 800/368-8686 (orders), or 408/973-7876 (info).

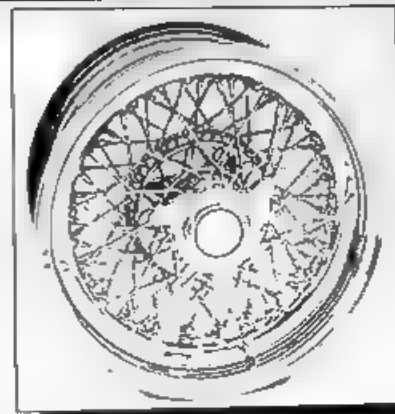


INTERIOR LIGHTING

Brighten up the interior of your specialty car with these new interior lighting accessories from StreetWorks. The firm has several different kits available, ranging from a trunk and hood light kit to an underdash courtesy light kit. They come with a heavy-duty tilt switch, connectors, light sockets, mounting brackets, five-foot lead, and installation instructions. Information: StreetWorks, P.O. Box 270, Dept. KC, Bozrah, CT 06334, 203/859-0513 KC



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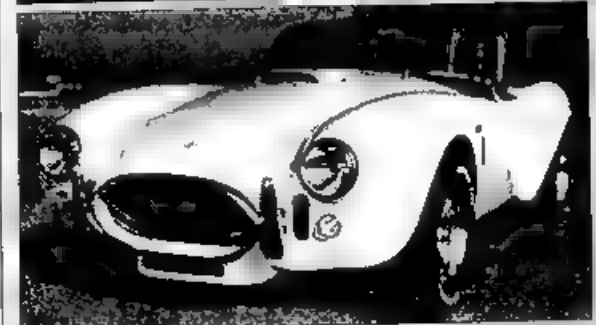


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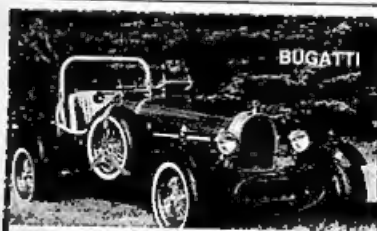
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